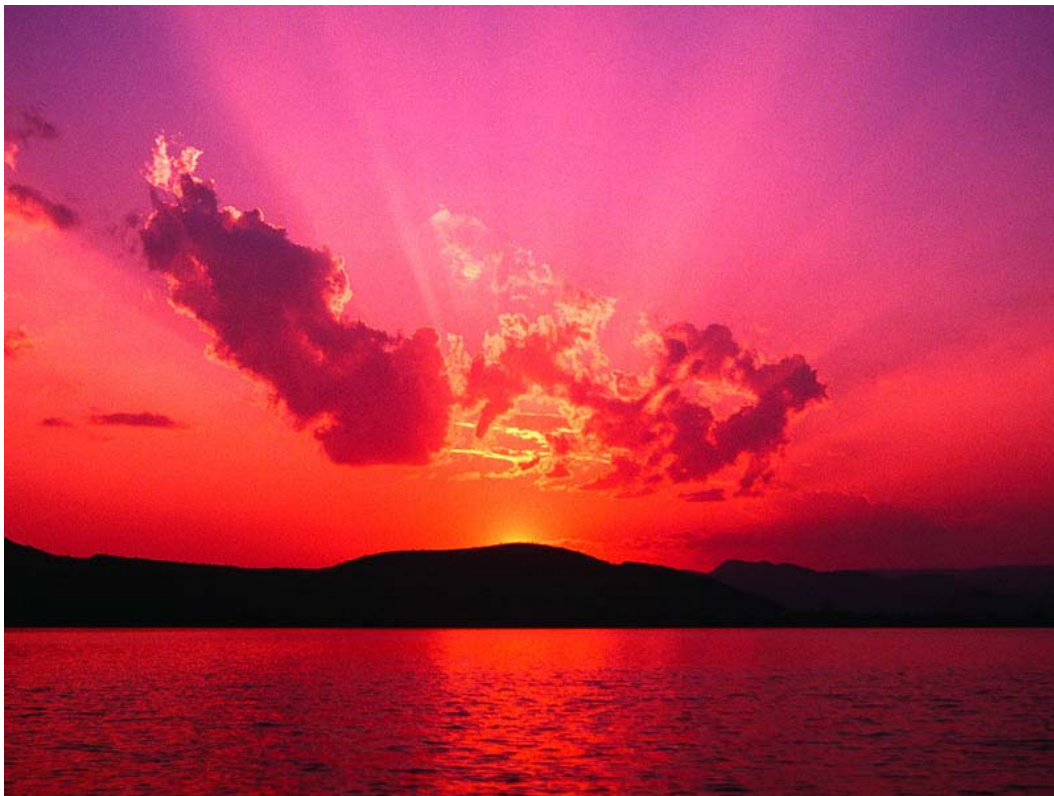


# **DRAFT**

## **FWP Flathead Lake Islands**

### **Recreation Plan**



**Prepared By: MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Parks and Wildlife Divisions  
490 N. Meridian Road  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
April 2003**

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## **Acknowledgements**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks recognizes the Flathead Lake Islands Planning Committee for their generous contributions of time and energy throughout this planning process. Without the committee member's dedication to the process, as well as their resources and innovation, the plan would not have been possible.

### **Committee Members**

Les Bigcrane – Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

Bobbie Gilmore – Glacier Sea Kayaking/Flathead Paddlers

Laney Hanzel – Flathead Lakers

Hank Harrington – Wild Horse Island Property Owners Association

Mike Hutchins – Lake County Commissioners

Sandy Macke – Polson Chamber of Commerce/Glacier Country Tourism Commission

Brent Mitchell – Flathead Chapter of Audubon Society/Flathead Wildlife

Bill Myers – Pointer Scenic Cruises

Greg Poncin – Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

### **Meeting Facilitators**

Ginny Tribe

Eric Wenum

### **Representatives from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

Tom Litchfield – District Biologist

Jerry Sawyer – Park Manager, Flathead Lake State Park

Kirsten Shelton – Parks Division Statewide Planner

## ***I. INTRODUCTION***

Flathead Lake is located in a region marked by increasing tourism and growth of the permanent population. Although tourism has brought economic benefit to the valley, it also presents challenges for protecting areas where the natural attributes which contribute to the uniqueness of the location, are at times significantly impacted, ironically, diminish the experience for which these areas were originally sought.

The Flathead Lake area has steadily grown in popularity as a tourist destination through the last decade. Use of the lake has increased and visits to state parks and fishing access sites have also risen. Increases of visitation has occurred not only on the mainland, but also on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) managed islands as well (Fig. 1). These include Bird, Cedar, O'Neil (Douglas) and Wild Horse Islands. In the summer months of July and August, mainland state park areas are near or at capacity, daily. Parking becomes congested at public fishing access sites such as Somers, Bigfork and Walstad. Wild Horse Island has shown a doubling in visitation from 1995 thru 2000 from approximately 5,000 to over 10,000 visits per year (Appendix A). It is also apparent from visual observations by FWP staff that the other islands are receiving more usage as well.

The difference between settings of mainland areas and the islands are significant. The mainland areas are designed for high use levels, where visitors have different expectations from island recreation expectations and the opportunities are more closely associated with higher development levels of facilities such as boat ramps, docks, and campgrounds with flush toilets and showers. On the other hand, the islands present a less crowded and more natural setting where opportunities exist for isolation from the sights and sounds of urban life and to feel more a part of the natural environment. It is important to protect this unique island experience at a time when increasing urbanization is rapidly shrinking the opportunity to relate to nature.

Montanans are indeed more fortunate than most in regard to access to natural areas. However, island recreational opportunities are few on Flathead Lake and the particular recreational experience that these islands afford may be jeopardized unless a proactive management strategy is utilized.

Figure 1. Flathead Lake Map

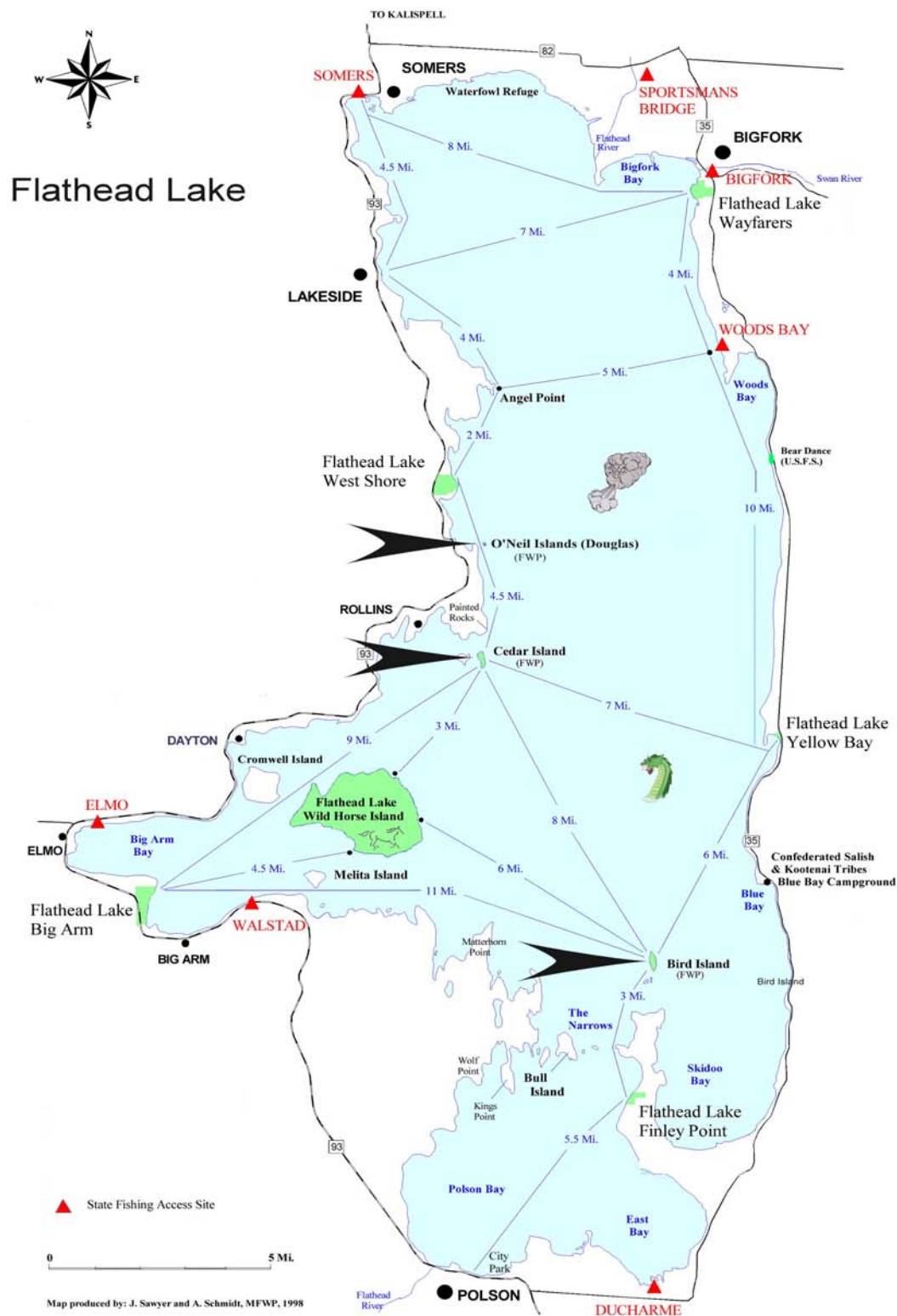


Figure 1

## ***II. PLANNING PROCESS***

The original plan for Wild Horse Island (WHI) was developed in 1978. To keep a plan effective, it must periodically undergo review for relevancy and to address changing circumstances. As a part of the planning process, periodic reviews of the WHI plan have occurred over the years. Reviews and plan updates occurred in 1986 and 1994, with a special review of the commercial use issue, in 1999. The current update procedure is a continuation of an adaptive planning process which addresses multiple issues identified for Wild Horse and adds the other FWP islands.

Past planning efforts for Wild Horse Island have historically included formation of an advisory committee to assist the Department with management decisions. Members are selected for their diversity of interests ranging from wildlife, recreation and wildfire expertise to tourism and economic development. The wide field of participants leads to alternative solutions that consider a broad range of viewpoints. The committee meets to help identify major issues in regards to social and physical impacts including threats to the resource and to suggest ways to better manage the island to meet its objectives. In this planning process a similar methodology was followed. However this process addresses not only Wild Horse Island, but the other FWP islands as well.

The Flathead Lake Islands Plan was developed through a broad public planning process, which included the FWP Islands Planning Committee, as well as a public comment period that included public meetings. The FWP Islands Planning Committee, an entirely citizen-based advisory committee, was formed in the fall of 2002 of representatives from a wide range of public and private interests (see Acknowledgements for a list of planning committee members). Guided by a professional facilitator, the group met monthly from December through March to identify issues pertaining to FWP's Flathead Lake Islands and develop management recommendations for FWP managers. The committee members met four times from mid-December to mid-March. During this period it developed a list of issue areas and a series of management recommendation for all the islands, which are incorporated into this document.

To provide additional public input into the process, a visitor study was conducted during the summer of 2002 covering the period from July 4<sup>th</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> (Appendix B). The study consisted of two surveys; one to assess visitor preferences for management of the islands and the

other to gather total visitor counts for this time period. Although limited in scope, the data is a ‘snapshot’ of visitor preferences for management of the island settings and is a useful beginning for determining future direction.

### ***III. MANAGEMENT APPROACH***

The purpose of this plan is to develop a consistent recreation management approach for all Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) owned islands on Flathead Lake. As previously noted, FWP manages four islands on Flathead Lake. The properties consist of Wild Horse, Cedar, Bird and O'Neil Islands. Of the four, Wild Horse Island (WHI) is the only one which has a previously written plan. The WHI plan addresses the protection of the natural resources of the island with special emphasis on recreational opportunities and management of visitor impacts.

Wild Horse Island is a State Park managed by the Parks Division. Cedar, Bird and O'Neil Islands are categorized as Waterfowl Management Area (WMAs) under the authority of the Wildlife Division of FWP. The different land management classifications of islands, i.e. State Park vs. WMA, has resulted in differing purposes and consequently management approaches. State Parks are managed for both resource protection and public recreation with active management toward the latter. The WMAs, on the other hand, are more passively managed with the original intent to provide nesting habitat for Canada Geese and other waterfowl. Recreation is incidental to the primary purpose, and public use, although tolerated, is not managed.

The end product of habitat protection through purchase of the WMA islands has been extremely successful, especially in reference to Canada Geese. This species has proliferated throughout the area and populations are high. Although habitat protection will continue to play a major role in order to ensure stable populations, another opportunity exists for these areas in providing recreation to the public. These areas can serve a dual purpose, especially when goose populations are not as critical an issue as in the past. However, the key to success is to manage the areas to allow for recreational use, while maintaining the primary management goals. This will require the WMA islands to be more actively managed.

Although, direct visitation data has not been gathered for the WMAs, as it has of Wild Horse Island, it is clear from observations that public use is beginning to show an impact on the WMA



islands. Since there is no expectation that visitation will decrease, it is prudent that FWP take a hard look at managing these areas for recreational use as well as for waterfowl habitat. There is a need to document impacts, so human usage trends can be more thoroughly analyzed, and appropriate management techniques applied to preserve the quality of the resource. To further this idea, a proposal has been put forth that would transfer recreation management for the WMAs from the Wildlife Division to the Parks Division. To accomplish this, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be drafted between the Wildlife and Parks Divisions. This would allow the Parks Division to adopt a management strategy similar to that of Wild Horse Island. The islands would be managed in a manner that provides resource protection while allowing compatible recreational opportunities. The Wildlife Division would still oversee the islands for wildlife benefits.

### ***Limits of Acceptable Change***

The 1994 WHI management plan update adopted a Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) approach and area zoning for the management of Wild Horse Island (Appendix C). This concept essentially states that change is a natural consequence of recreation use and involves both environmental and social changes. The type and extent of these changes varies from area to area because of differences in types and amounts of use, susceptibility of vegetation and soils, desire for solitude and other factors. LAC directs its attention from a maximum use level or carrying capacity as the key management concern, to the environmental and social conditions desired in a setting. It focuses directly on managing for desired conditions rather than in specifying a particular maximum number of visitors, which when exceeded, requires management action. LAC utilizes what are known as opportunity classes, which describe the desired type of recreational opportunity one would normally experience in a particular setting or area. Once descriptions for desired conditions are developed for an area, management actions cannot result in outcomes that are not compatible with those prescriptions

## ***Zoning***

Zoning for recreation areas, in principle, is no different than that found in city or county planning. A particular land area is set aside for specific uses. Just as areas of a city may have single-family dwellings vs. multiple dwellings or allow small businesses along with cluster housing. Recreation areas can be zoned for particular types of recreational opportunities, activities and facilities. The zones allow for specific management techniques and strategies that reflect the attributes of the resource, potential recreational opportunities and management objectives.

If the Waterfowl Management Area islands are to be managed in a manner similar to Wild Horse Island, then the approach will use a strategy combining zoning with the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) concept.

## ***Guiding Principles***

In addition to the above mentioned techniques for management of the islands in accordance with a LAC approach, it was part of the advisory committee's role to make recommendations and develop more finely honed guiding principles for managing all the islands. The following guidelines were formulated by the advisory committee and adopted by FWP:

- Wild Horse Island is a primitive park.
- For the WMAs, concern for protection of waterfowl habitat should guide all management decisions.
- Active management strategies, including fire, chemical, biological and mechanical measures where appropriate, can protect and maintain the islands and their ecosystems.
- The priority in management decisions and actions should be protection of the Islands environment.
- In order to preserve the wild experience of visitors and the health of the ecosystem, dispersed access should be promoted.
- An island is one component in a larger ecosystem and it is important to monitor impacts of activities around the islands.

- All use of the islands should complement the management goals of protecting the resource and should provide opportunities for the public to experience the islands.

From these guidelines, goals and objectives were formulated which ensure that all the islands, including Wild Horse Island, retain their original priorities and are actively managed for dispersed recreation. The following goals and objectives, which incorporate the prior planning goals set for Wild Horse, will be adopted for the new co- management approach for all the Flathead Lake FWP islands.

### ***Management Goals***

- 1) To preserve and where necessary, to the greatest extent possible, restore the natural ecological processes and conditions that exist on the islands.
- 2) To ensure that current wildlife habitat is maintained and that opportunities for species propagation are not diminished.
- 3) To provide a range of compatible dispersed recreational opportunities, while maintaining the natural character of the islands.
- 4) To provide educational opportunities, which allow the public to experience, understand and appreciate the unique natural, historical and cultural features of the islands, and which stimulates interest in ecological principles.

The management goals will be achieved through the attainment of the following objectives:

### ***Management Objectives***

- a) Develop workable management strategies and actions that will preserve the natural conditions of the islands' resources, while providing for regulated compatible recreational activities.
- b) Continue to provide secure wildlife breeding and waterfowl nesting habitat during critical periods through seasonal closures where necessary.
- c) Develop and implement programs for data collection and resource monitoring of visitor use and impacts.

- d) Develop standards for Limits of Acceptable Change and adapt and utilize them for the all of the islands.

### ***Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities***

People choose recreation settings based on their expectations about the nature of the recreation experience. Individual's choices often are made with regard to accessibility of the site or area. More developed locations evoke images of easier accessibility than those of a primitive area. Wild Horse and the Waterfowl Management Area Islands with their more primitive type setting will not include facilities to make it more accessible than would otherwise be anticipated in their natural state. Efforts made to improve access for persons with disabilities will be limited by their impact on the primitive nature of the islands. Designated trails, where established, will be designed for the type of accessibility where the recreation experience and natural environment are the most important considerations. Modifications solely for accessibility are determined to be inappropriate for these types of settings. Efforts to inform individuals of accessibility difficulties will be made through signing at landing sites and other public mainland departure points, and through informational brochures. Electric or hand powered wheelchairs will be allowed if an individual requires one. However, no accommodation or modification to existing conditions will be made for their use. Resource impacts will determine if other restrictions are necessary for wheelchair use as their design and power systems become more technologically advanced.

#### IV. FWP ISLANDS BACKGROUND

##### Wild Horse Island

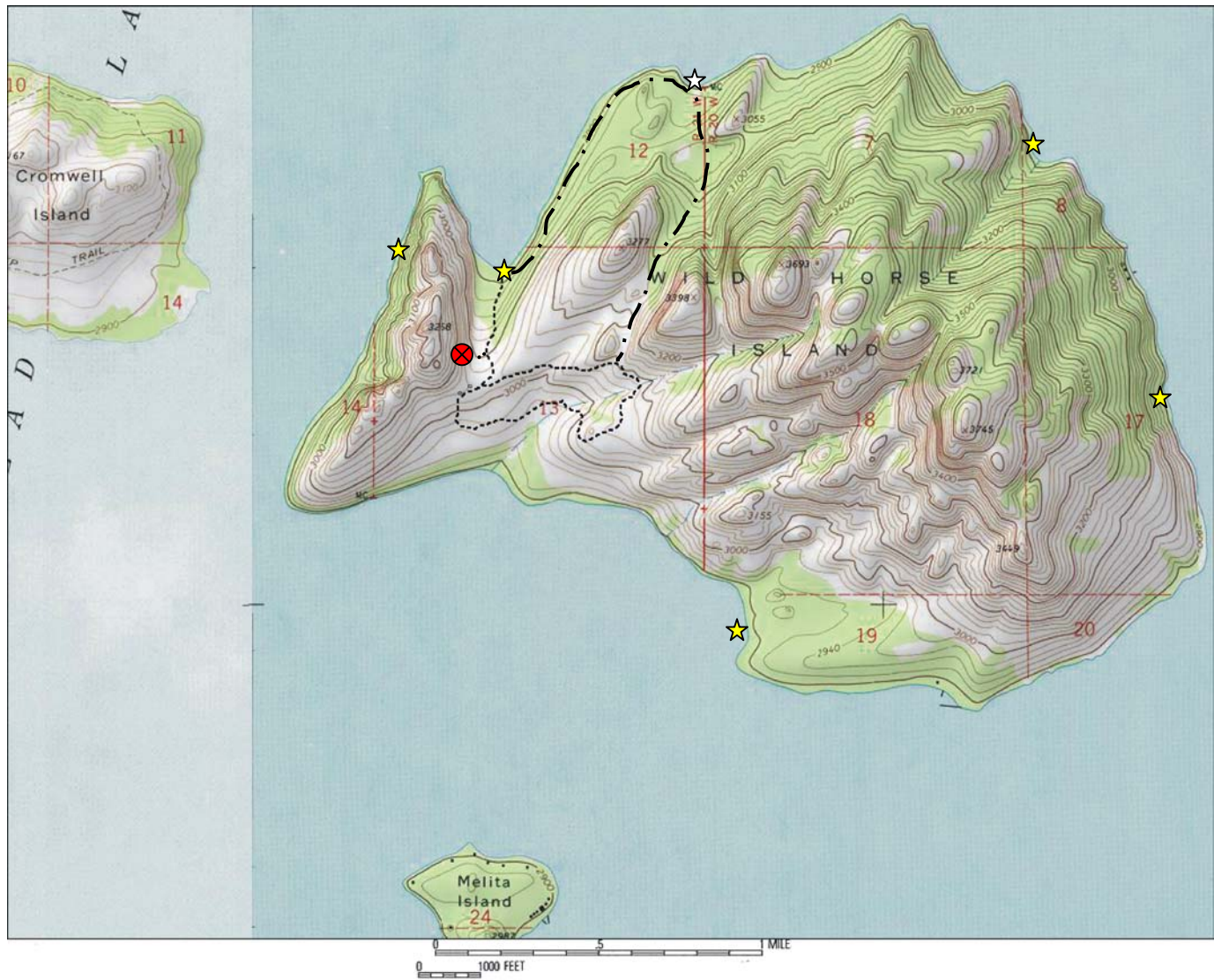
Wild Horse Island is located near Big Arm Bay on Flathead Lake (Fig. 2). It is situated within the exterior boundary of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Reservation. Most of the island became a State Park in 1978 through the cooperative efforts of the McDonald family, the Nature Conservancy and the State. The island consists of 2,163 acres. When the island was transferred to state ownership, the previous owner retained possession of 56 private lots ranging in size from ½ to 1 acre. These are located along the perimeter of the island with about half developed with summer homes.



(Hikers on WHI)

Although Wild Horse Island had been previously managed by FWP to maintain its primitive character, it officially was designated a “Primitive Park” in 1993 by the Montana Legislature (Appendix D). Under this designation the park’s “development” is limited to signing, hiking trails and facilities for safety and health. There are no major facilities in the park, although a compost toilet has been installed near Skeeko Bay for sanitary reasons. The park is currently managed under the “Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC)” concept in order to preserve its primitive character. LAC is the basic management principle used by various federal agencies to maintain wilderness or backcountry areas. Wild Horse Island boasts some of the best watchable wildlife opportunities in the state with herds of bighorn sheep and mule deer, nesting bald eagles, osprey, and numerous species of songbirds. Additionally, to maintain its namesake tradition, the island has a small resident population of wild horses obtained through the Bureau of Land Management’s “Adopt a Horse” program. Other inhabitants of the island include coyotes, badgers, squirrels and other small mammals with an occasional black bear and mountain lion. Another feature of interest includes a historic cabin and barn, and an apple and pear orchard dating back to the first homesteaders. Wild Horse Island contains one of the few remaining segments of native Palouse prairie to be found in Montana. This includes Spalding’s Catchfly (*Silene spaldingii*) an endangered plant species.

Figure 2. Wild Horse Island



Designated Public Landing Site



Designated Hiking Trail



Public Toilet



Proposed Trail Addition



Proposed Designated Landing Site

Over time, Wild Horse Island has come to hold special meaning for those who have visited its rocky shores to hike, picnic, and observe wildlife and the many prairie flowers, or simply to enjoy the peaceful solitude.

### **Waterfowl Management Area Islands (WMAs)**

Cedar (Marshall), Bird (Ainsworth) and O'Neil (Douglas) Islands comprise part of the Flathead Lake Waterfowl Management Area (WMA). As mentioned, the intent of the Flathead Lake WMA is specifically to provide secure nesting habitat for Canada Geese and other waterfowl. All three islands were purchased with a combination of state license fees and Pitt-man Robinson Federal Aid monies in 25/75 ratio. The use of federal dollars requires that certain conditions are met and continue to be met during the course of ownership by FWP. Among these stipulations is the requirement that the land continue to be utilized as nesting habitat for waterfowl. Compatible recreation is allowed, but must be kept to a level that does not reduce habitat or interfere with the breeding season. In the past, the islands have been managed with tolerance for limited recreation use although the areas have historically been closed to public access between March 1 and June 15. However, little if any signing was ever posted. The few signs indicating management by FWP that were initially placed have disappeared over time. Currently no permanent signing pertaining to information, regulation or interpretation exists on the islands.

### **Cedar Island**

Cedar Island is comprised of approximately 23 acres. It was purchased in 1954 from the Marshall family. The island is forested with Douglas fir and Ponderosa pine with several open meadows. Other than Wild Horse Island, Cedar has received the most public use (Fig. 3). It includes a large house structure built in the late 1920s with a boathouse and several out buildings (Appendix E) .



(Cedar Island House)



The house porch has been popular for years as a camping area. Additionally, about 50 yards to the south there is a wire fence enclosing an old orchard approximately 3-4 acres in size. Although a few fruit trees still exist, the area has been taken over by shrubs and grasses.

The house and surrounding area show heavy impacts to soils and significant vegetation loss from original habitation and subsequent visits from the public through the years. The house is badly deteriorating. The interior is ripped up and graffiti covers the interior and exterior walls. The stability of the stairs and upstairs flooring is questionable. The roof is comprised of overlapping metal sheets, but water from rain and snow can still enter the interior. The structure's windows have long been broken out contributing to water damage. The interior reeks with rodent urine odors and the floors are covered with rodent feces.

### **Zelezny Access Site**

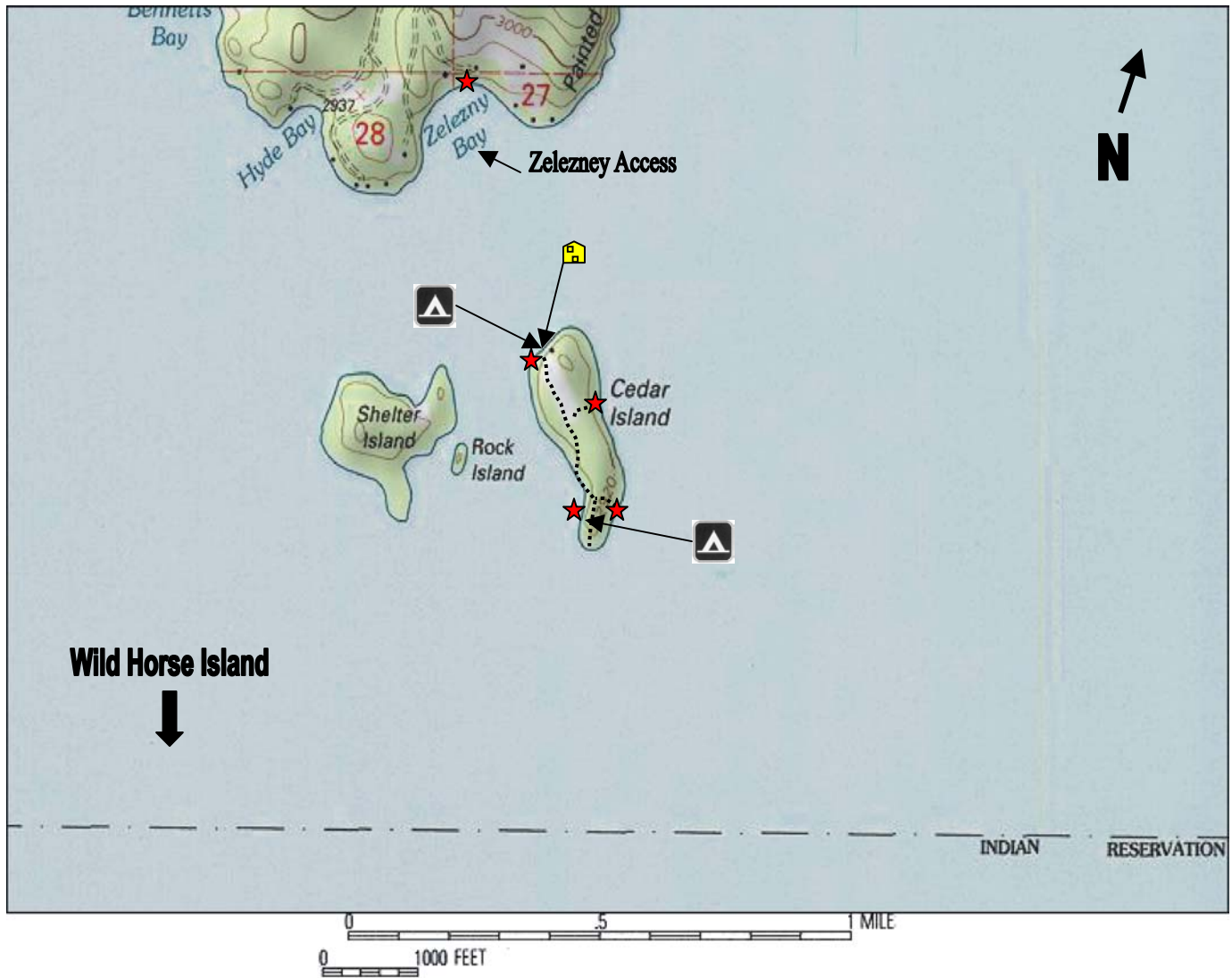
The purchase of Cedar Island also included a small lot (@129'x 211') on the mainland known as the Zelezny access. The lot is about ½ mile to the west of the island and about 2mi. east from Hwy 93. The deed includes a perpetual road easement to Hwy 93 from the access site via a gravel road. A small dock has been built on site by a local property owner (Appendix F). Over time, the presence of the dock has resulted in numerous user conflicts.



( Zelezny Parking Area )



**Figure 3. Cedar Island**



- ★ Primary Landing site
- ▲ Camping Area
- ... Developed Hiking Trail
- 🏠 Homestead Buildings

## **Bird Island**

Bird Island is a heavily forested 30-acre island located in the eastern portion of Flathead Lake. In 1953, Bird Island was purchased by FWP from the Ainsworth family for purposes of the aforementioned goose habitat. It is in close proximity to a cluster of small islands known as the Flathead Lake Bird Preserve. The Bird Preserve was established by the Montana Legislature in 1947 and is managed by the University of Montana (U. of M.) as a biological reserve for the purpose of providing for the "breeding, propagating, and protection of all species of birds."



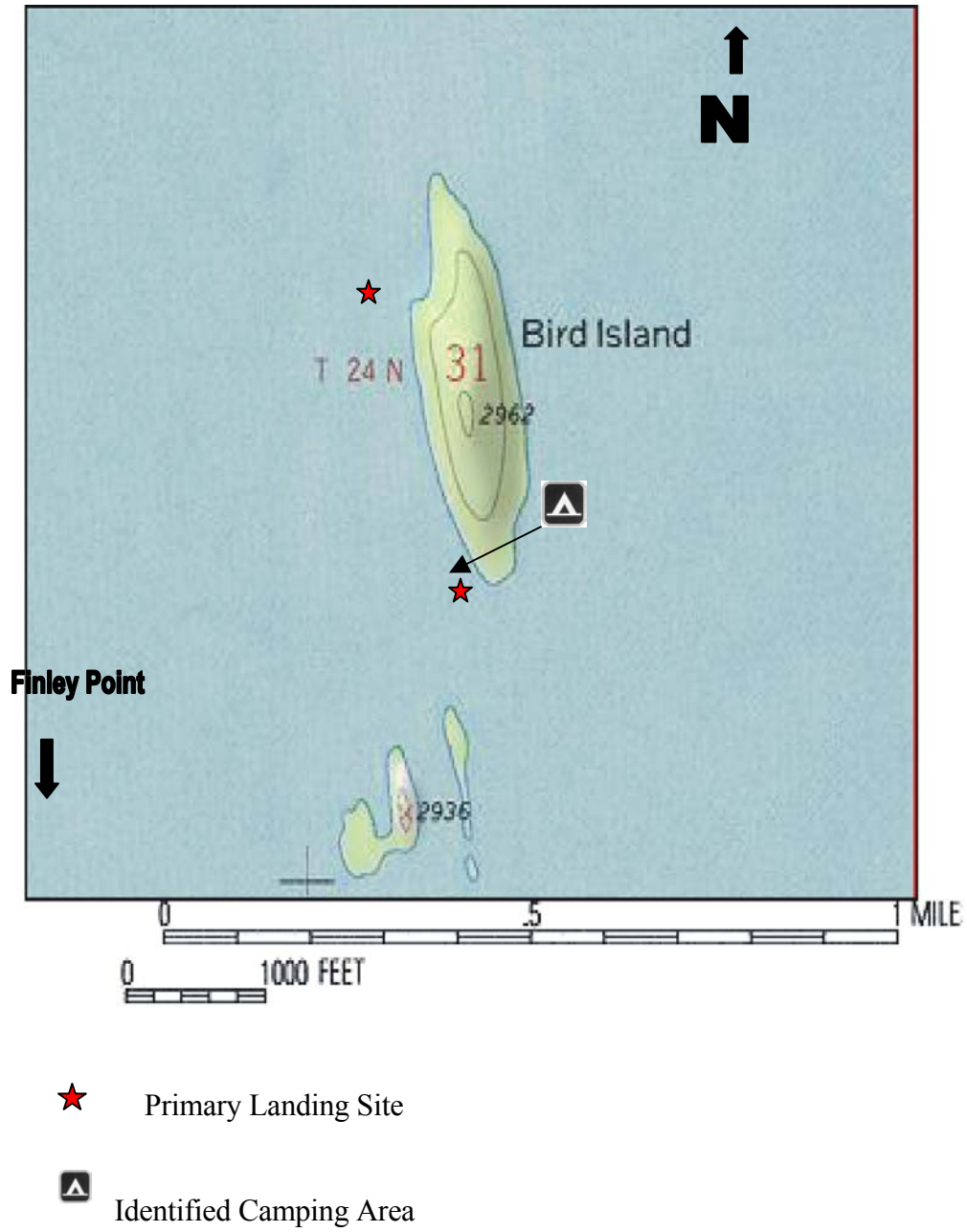
(View of Bird Island looking east)

Although not technically included in the legislatively established bird preserve, Bird Island has in effect been managed as part of the preserve for many years. In 1983, an interagency agreement between FWP and the University of Montana gave U. of M. formal permission to use the island for research purposes as long as the university activities were in keeping with the intent of the island's purchase. "No trespass" signs were placed on the island by the University to prohibit public access, so that research projects would not be disrupted. Since the mid-90's the University has not conducted any research projects on the island. In 1997, the no trespassing signs were removed by FWP and unregulated public access has been allowed. Unlike Cedar Island, Bird's past usage as a research area by the University and subsequent public closure, has helped preserve the island, making it one of the more pristine of the FWP island properties.

Due to its rocky shoreline, the island affords only a few access points (Fig. 4). There are small gravel beaches on the northwest side and southern tip of the island. Other areas can be used for access, but are generally not conducive to beaching a boat. The landing sites have become popular for shoreline picnickers, swimmers and campers.

Well-defined hiking trails are non-existent, however access trails are beginning to develop along the west shoreline. Some evidence of trampling and minor vegetation loss has been observed at the landing sites. The interior of the island is thick with underbrush and the lack of any trails indicates few visitors venture far from the shoreline.

**Figure 4. Bird Island**



### **O'Neil Islands**

O'Neil Islands are comprised of two small rocky knolls located just south of Table Bay on the west side of Flathead Lake (Fig. 5). They were purchased in 1985 from the O'Neil family. The larger of the two, is approximately .53 acres in size and has a moderately dense growth of Douglas fir and Ponderosa pine with little underbrush. The smaller island is hardly more than a rock outcrop and is barely visible above the waterline at full pool and has no recreational value.



(View of O'Neil Islands looking north)

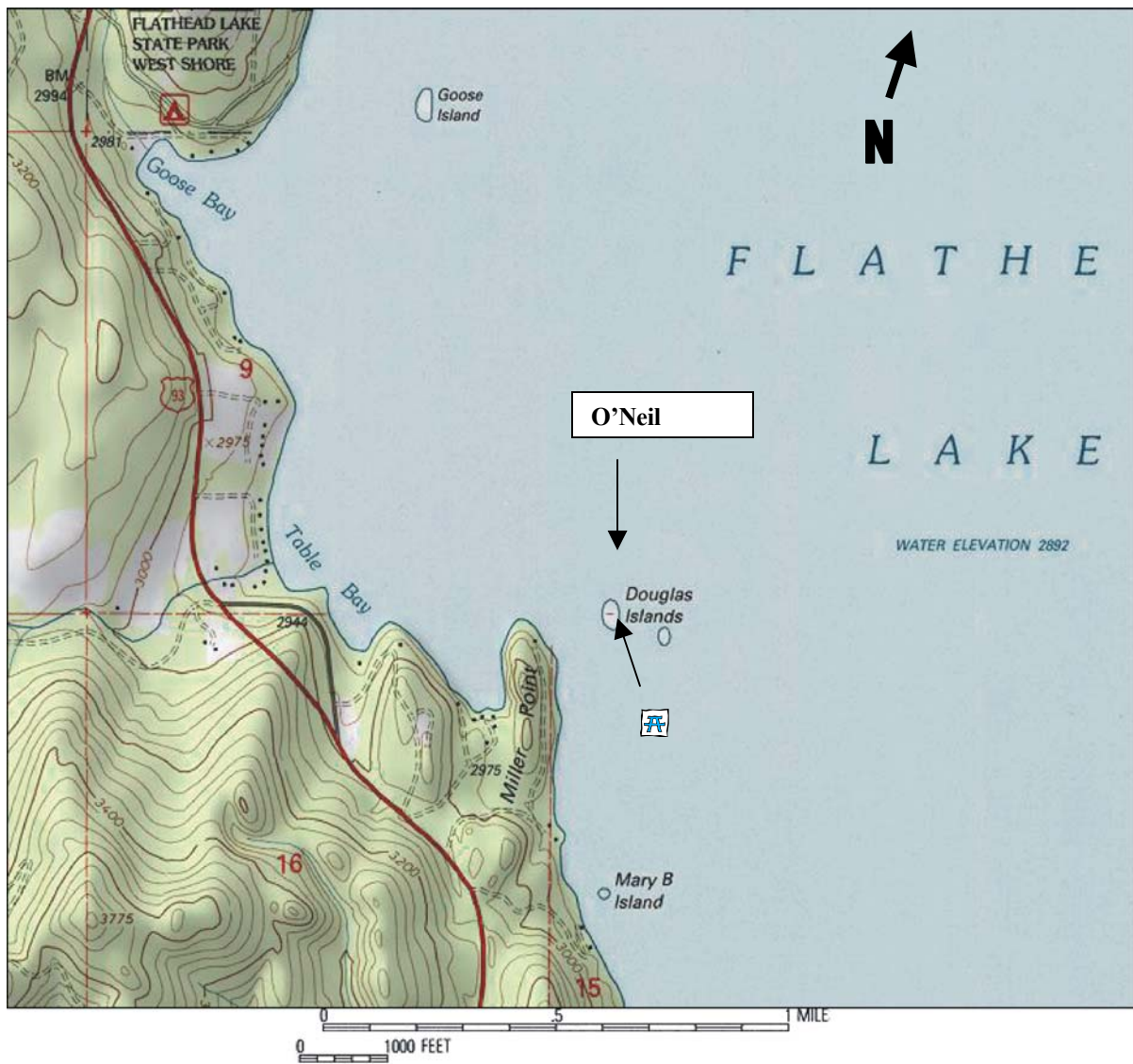
The larger island, first glance, would also appear to have little onsite recreation potential. However, there is a relatively flat area approximately 20' x 20' at the top of the rocky knoll, which would make an acceptable camp or picnic site with excellent scenic views. The island has no other flat ground. A major drawback to this island is that it has no beach area. The entire perimeter is extremely rocky.

Although access is difficult, there are some locations on the west side of the island where canoes or kayaks can be pulled from the water. Additionally, due to sharp drop-offs along the rocky shore, on a calm day, larger boats can be tied off or anchored. The island appears to receive little visitation, most likely due to its rugged shoreline.



(West Shoreline of O'Neil Island)

**Figure 5. O'Neil Islands (a.k.a. Douglas)**



 Potential Picnic Site

#### ***IV. MANAGEMENT ISSUES***

During the planning process, the Advisory Committee identified issues relevant to each island and then developed recommendations for management actions related to each issue. Table 1 summarizes identified issues for each island. The table is followed by more complete descriptions of each island. Management actions were developed based on committee recommendations.

**Table 1. IDENTIFIED ISSUES AND CONCERNS FOR FWP ISLANDS**

▼ <i>Item #</i>	<i>A. Human Related Issues</i>	<i>Cedar</i>	<i>Bird</i>	<i>O'Neil</i>	<i>Wild Horse</i>
1.	Visitor Hazards	X	x		X
2.	Campsites Impacts	X	x		
3.	Proliferation of Non-designated Access Trails	X	x		x
4.	Proliferation of Fire Rings	X	x		
5.	Pet Running Loose	X	x		x
6.	Sanitation/Trash	X	x	x	x
7.	Visitation Management	X	x		x
8.	Vandalism/Property Disturbance/Rule Violations	X	x		X
9.	Public/Private Conflict				x
	<i>B. Vegetation Issues</i>				
10.	Control of Exotic Plants and Noxious Weeds	X	x		X
11.	Fuel Mgmt. & Fire Prevention	X	X	x	X
12.	Vegetation Loss at Impacted Sites	X			x
13.	Grasslands Preservation/restoration				X
	<i>C. Soils Issues</i>				
14.	Compacted Soils & Bare Soil Increase	X			x
15.	Trail and Site Erosion	X	x		x
	<i>D. Wildlife Issues</i>				
16.	Wildlife Habitat & Species Protection	x	x	x	x
17.	Disturbance During Breeding	x	x	x	x
	<i>E. Public Facilities Issues</i>				
18.	Information/Regulatory/Interpretive Signing	X	X	x	x
19.	Hiking Trails	X	x		x
20.	Campsites	X	X		
21.	Sanitation	X	x		x
22.	Docks/Mooring Buoys/tie offs	x	x		X
23.	Emergency Facilities (phone/water)				x
24.	Island Disabled Access	x	x		x
25.	Docks/Parking (Zeletzny access only)				
	<i>F. Administration</i>				
26.	Commercial Use	X	X	x	X
27.	Use of volunteers	X	x		X
28.	Cultural and Historic Site Inventory	X	X	x	X

\* Large cap X denotes significant issue. Issues marked by small cap x, though still a concern, denote a lesser significance and may require only minor actions or monitoring

## ***ISLAND ISSUES IDENTIFICATION***

The advisory committee considered Cedar, Bird and O’Neil Islands together during the planning process because of the similar primitive nature, their smaller size and differing mandate. Although issues pertaining to each island are discussed separately in this plan, the management recommendations are combined for all three islands. Wild Horse Island was considered separately and issues and management recommendations are, therefore, listed separately for WHI. The commercial use management recommendations for all islands are addressed at the end of the Management Strategy.

### **Issue Discussions**

(The item numbers below correspond to those identified in the Table 1. Only identified items specific to an island are discussed.)

## **CEDAR ISLAND**

### **A. Human Related Issues**

#### **1. Visitor Hazards**

- Badly deteriorating old homestead buildings on the north end of island present safety hazards to the public. Heavy rodent feces deposits are present in the buildings and represent the potential for Hanta virus hazard.
- A wire fence surrounds the old orchard area and is down in some places presenting a tripping hazard.
- Old broken waterline pipes are sticking up out of the ground near the buildings.
- Snags overhang popular landing and picnic sites.

#### **2. Campsite Impacts**

- Loss of vegetation and bare soil increase is occurring at dispersed campsites.
- The number of dispersed campsites has increased over the last few years.

#### **3. Proliferation of non-designated access trails**

- There are no designated (maintained) trails on the island. There are numerous braided trails leading up from the landing sites and multiple trails across the island.

#### **4. Proliferation of campfires**



- Numerous old fire scars exist around the island at campsites and have been observed along the shoreline. Some sites have multiple fire rings present.
- Currently no prohibition on fires of any kind

#### 5. Pets running loose

- Currently there are no restrictions on pets. Pets have been observed running loose and there have been complaints from visitors. Pets running loose can have an impact on wildlife and other visitor experiences.

#### 6. Sanitation/trash

- No sanitation facilities exist on the island and human waste is often observed near the popular landing areas. Visitors often leave trash near the buildings. No signing is present.

#### 7. Visitation management

- No controls over usage exist. There are no group size limits. Camping is traditional and dispersed, occurring mostly near the homestead and at the south end of the island. There are no regulations governing fire use, nor are there any other regulations posted. Large groups (20-30) have occasionally been observed on the island as well as having been reported by the public.

#### 8. Vandalism/Property Disturbance/Rule Violations

- Vandalism is extensive at the old homestead. This includes graffiti, ripped out sections of walls and floors and smashed bottles.
- No regulations are posted hence depreciative behavior occurs here more than at any of the other islands. Large parties have occasionally been reported occurring at the homestead.
- There have been reports and evidence of paint ball games occurring on the island the past few years.
- Complaints of shooting off of fireworks are reported every summer.

### **B. Vegetation Issues**

#### 10. Control of exotic plants and noxious weeds

- Canada Thistle is well established in the old orchard area. Other non-native plant species are also present in this area.

#### 11. Fuel Mgmt. & Fire Prevention

- No efforts have been made to control the buildup of fuels. Many areas of the island have dense stands of Douglas fir with Ponderosa pine. Mistletoe is heavy in the trees surrounding the homestead.
- As mentioned, there are no restrictions on building fires.

## 12. Vegetation loss at impacted sites

- Heavy vegetation loss is apparent in the area around the homestead buildings. Additionally, 5 campsites varying from 150-300 sq. ft. have been identified where vegetation loss is greater than 50% when compared to offsite conditions.
- Numerous spur trails contribute to unnecessary vegetation loss.

### **C. Soil Issues**

## 14. Compacted soils & bare soil increase

- Soil compaction is evident at the frequently used campsites, along multiple access trails and especially in the area of the main homestead building, where years of trampling have eliminated most ground vegetation.

## 15. Trail and site erosion

- Erosion affects are visible on some sections of trails located on steeper slopes. This occurs primarily on access trails leading up from the landing sites near the old house and on trails leading up from the beach in the southwest and northeast coves.

### **D. Wildlife Issues**

## 16. Wildlife and habitat protection

- Currently there is no evidence that the habitat for nesting waterfowl has deteriorated.

## 17. Disturbance during breeding

- At present, there is no indication that human disturbance is occurring at unacceptable levels or having any measurable impact. The breeding season coincides with low recreation use periods.

### **E. Public Facilities Issues**

## 18. Information/Regulatory/Interpretive signing

- Minor signing is present. An old “Game Mgmt. Area” sign and a “no fires” sign can be seen near the homestead. Signing is absent on the rest of the island.

## 19. Hiking Trails

- There is no designated and maintained trail system. However, there are numerous trails existing over the island often with multiple access trails from one location to another.

## 20. Campsites

- Eight campsites have been identified with vegetative loss ranging from approximately 25-100% within the site area. Camping primarily occurs near the old homestead, on the north and south ends of the orchard and on the south end of the island.

## 21. Sanitation

- No sanitary facilities are present. Human waste is often seen in the summer near the homestead buildings.

## 22. Docks/Mooring Buoys/ties offs

- None of these are present. Visitors must beach their boats or drop anchor offshore and access via raft or similar craft. A dock once existed near the homestead, but all that remains is a break wall of piled rocks.

## 25. Zelezny Access

- The access site consists of approximately 3/4 acre of land and is located on the mainland @1/2 mi. to the west of the island. It has a small dock and shore station built by a local property owner. The owners of the dock access their property on nearby Shelter Island from the FWP site and store their boat at the shore station adjacent to the dock. The dock is small and lightly engineered about 20'x4' long with a right angle section @ 10-12' in length forming an L shape. Overall it would be characterized as flimsy construction. The parking lot has room for @4-5 vehicles without trailers. A steep road coming off the main roadway leads down to the site.

## **F. Administration**

## 26. Commercial use

- Some commercial use is occurring. This appears only to involve stopovers for various motorboat and kayak tours.

## 27. Use of volunteers

- FWP currently has no program for using volunteers at the island.

## 28. Cultural/historical Inventory

- Inventories for the above, have not been performed.

## **BIRD ISLAND**

### **A. Human Related Issues**

#### 1. Visitor Hazards

- Snags overhang the popular landing and picnic sites.
- Poison ivy is present along the shore on the south tip of the island

#### 2. Campsite Impacts

- Minor loss of vegetation has occurred at dispersed campsites on the south end of the island. Compaction of soils at the sites appears to be insignificant. These areas would be expected to fully recover if camping ceases.

#### 3. Proliferation of non-designated access trails

- There are no designated (maintained) trails on the island. Minor trails follow the shoreline for a short distance from the main landing areas. No trails exist inland.

#### 4. Proliferation of campfires

- An old fire scars have been observed near the shoreline at the primary landing areas.
- Currently there is no prohibition on fires of any kind.

#### 5. Pets running loose

- There are no restrictions on pets. Pets have been observed running loose, although no complaints have been received. Pets running loose can have an impact on wildlife and other visitor experiences.

#### 6. Sanitation/trash

- No sanitation facilities exist on the island and human waste has been observed on occasion near the popular landing areas. Minor amounts of trash have been picked up from the landing areas. No signing is present.

#### 7. Visitation management

- No controls over usage exist. There are no group size limits. Camping does occur on the south end of the island, but is infrequent. There are no regulations governing fire use, nor are any other regulations posted.

#### 8. Vandalism/Property Disturbance/Rule Violations

- The vandalism on the island has been confined to the chopping down of a few, small diameter trees at the northwest landing site.
- No regulations are posted to dissuade depreciative behavior.

## **B. Vegetation Issues**

### 10. Control of exotic plants and noxious weeds

- Poison ivy is well established on the south tip of the island.

### 11. Fuel Mgmt. & Fire Prevention

- No efforts have been made to control the buildup of fuels. Many areas of the island have dense stands of Douglas fir with Ponderosa pine and heavy underbrush. More open areas exist on the north end of the island where vegetation is less dense.
- There are no restrictions on building fires.

### 12. Vegetation loss at impacted sites

- Minor vegetation loss can be observed at the campsites at the south tip of the island.
- Some vegetation loss occurs on the spur trails leading which follow the shoreline from the landing sites.

## **C. Soil Issues**

### 14. Compacted soils & bare soil increase

- Soil compaction is minor at the campsites due to infrequent use and the buildup of duff. Some compaction occurs on developing access trails.

### 15. Trail and site erosion

- Erosion affects are minor, but visible on some sections of the developing shoreline trails.

## **D. Wildlife Issues**

### 16. Wildlife and habitat protection

- Currently there is no evidence that the habitat for nesting waterfowl has deteriorated.

### 17. Disturbance during breeding

- At present, there is no indication that human disturbance is occurring at unacceptable levels or having any measurable impact. The breeding season coincides with low recreation use periods.

## **E. Public Facilities Issues**

### 18. Information/Regulatory/Interpretive signing

- No signing is present on the island.

### 19. Hiking Trails

- There are no designated or maintained trails. Shoreline trails are beginning to develop.

### 20. Campsites

- Campsites have been identified, but with little vegetative loss within the site area. Camping appears to be infrequent and primarily occurs near the south end of the island.

### 21. Sanitation

- No sanitary facilities are present. Human waste has sometimes been observed near the landing sites.

### 22. Docks/Mooring Buoys/ties offs

- None of these are present. Visitors must beach their boats or drop anchor offshore and access via raft or similar craft.

## **F. Administration**

### 26. Commercial use

- Some commercial use is occurring at Cedar Island although levels are unknown. This appears only to involve stopovers for various motorboat and canoe/kayak tours.

### 27. Use of volunteers

- FWP currently has no program for using volunteers at the island.

### 28. Cultural/historical Inventory

- Inventories for the above, have not been performed.

## **O'NEIL ISLANDS**

### **A. Human Related Issues**

#### 4. Pets running loose

- Currently there are no restrictions on pets.

#### 5. Sanitation/trash

- No sanitation facilities exist on the island. No evidence of human waste has been observed.
- Minor bits of paper trash have been found. No signing is present.

#### 6. Visitation management

- No controls over usage exist. There are no group size limits. There are no regulations governing fire use, camping nor are any other regulations posted. Large groups have not been observed and as yet not a problem as the shoreline is very rocky and access limited.

#### 7. Vandalism/Property Disturbance/Rule Violations

- No evidence of vandalism has been observed.

### **B. Vegetation Issues**

#### 9. Fuel Mgmt. & Fire Prevention

- Due to the size of the island and rocky nature, vegetation is limited. However, some large trees do exist with minor ground cover and could support a fire.
- There are no restrictions on building fires.

### **C. Soil Issues - None**

### **D. Wildlife Issues**

#### 16. Wildlife and habitat protection

- Currently there is no evidence that the habitat for nesting waterfowl has deteriorated.

#### 17. Disturbance during breeding

- Currently, there is no indication that human disturbance is occurring at unacceptable levels or having any measurable impact. The breeding season coincides with low recreation use periods.

## **E. Public Facilities Issues**

### 18. Information/Regulatory/Interpretive signing

- No signing is present

## **F. Administration**

### 26. Commercial use

- Level unknown. Likely very little commercial activity. May be used as a stopover for canoe or kayak tours.

### 27. Use of volunteers

- FWP currently has no program for using volunteers at the island. Volunteer use could be used for monitoring, inspection or site cleanup. E.g. Adopt –a-Site program

### 28. Cultural/historical Inventory

- Inventories for the above, have not been performed.



## **WILD HORSE ISLAND**

### **A. Human Related Issues**

#### **1. Visitor Hazards**

- Homestead cabin and barn present safety hazards to the public due to easy access to interior of the structures. Rodent feces and bird droppings are present in the buildings and may present a health hazard.
- Remnant wire fencing still exists around the island creating tripping hazards for visitors and wildlife.
- There are snags overhanging popular landing and picnic sites.

#### **3. Proliferation of non-designated access trails**

- There is one designated loop trail on the island. There are numerous braided trails leading up from the landing sites and multiple parallel trails across the island. However, many of these are well developed game trails which may make closing of some, difficult.

#### **5. Pets running loose**

- Currently there are restrictions on pets. However, pets have been observed running loose and there have been complaints from visitors. Pets running loose can have an impact on wildlife and other visitor experiences.

#### **6. Sanitation/trash**

- Visitors often leave trash at the landing sites. This is mostly confined to paper products. Signing is present.
- Lack of toilet facilities has resulted in visible signs of human waste, especially in the Skeeko Bay area. However, recent installation of a compost toilet may resolve this issue. In others areas, visible evidence is infrequent.

#### **7. Visitation management**

- Visitor management controls exist. There are group size limits (15) and no camping, fires, pets or mountain bikes are allowed. Some illegal camping occurs, although violations appear low. Visitors are encouraged to land at 5 designated landing sites, although at present may land at any point along the public shoreline. Visitor distribution is highest at Skeeko Bay and management zone 4 receives the greatest amount of visitors.

#### **8. Vandalism/Property Disturbance/Rule Violations**

- Vandalism is worsening at the old homestead. This includes graffiti, ripped out sections of walls and floors and a few smashed bottles.

- Shed deer antlers are being removed from the island by visitors
- “No pets” continues to be the most unpopular regulation and has the highest rate of non-compliance of all regulations relating to the island.

#### 9. Public/private conflicts

- Conflicts over the public using private docks still occur. There are no public docks at Wild Horse Island.

### **B. Vegetation Issues**

#### 10. Control of exotic plants and noxious weeds

- Canada Thistle is well established in the wetter low-lying areas. Patches of leafy spurge have been identified and continue to be chemically treated though not eradicated. Knapweed, though not a major problem, periodically is discovered in small patches. Isolated plants have been identified mostly near landing sites. Other non-native plant species such as cheat and quack grasses are also present on the island.

#### 11. Fuel Mgmt. & Fire Prevention

- No efforts have been made to control the buildup of fuels. Many areas of the island have dense stands of Douglas fir with Ponderosa pine. Thick clusters of small Ponderosa pine encroach on the grasslands and present major fuel buildup.
- Many of the Ponderosa pine show evidence of some type of needle blight and there are numerous standing and fallen dead trees.

#### 12. Vegetation loss at impacted sites

- Vegetation loss is apparent in the area around the homestead buildings and at the landing sites, especially at the popular Skeeko Bay area.
- Impacts at the Skeeko Bay landing site have approximately doubled in the last 10 years. Other landing sites show low to moderate trampling effects;
- Braided trails leading up from the landing sites contribute to unnecessary vegetation loss.

#### 13. Grasslands restoration

- Ponderosa pine continues to encroach on prairie areas. Other exotic plant species are distributed throughout the grasslands.
- The survival of *Silene spaldingii* is questionable and only a few individual plants existed as of 1998.
- Fire as a tool is being proposed to contribute to the health of the grasslands, but some areas have high concentrations of cheat grass or are too close to structures for fire to be safely used. Limited mechanical cutting has been used near the old homestead buildings. However, no plan or overall strategy for prairie restoration has been developed.

### **C. Soil Issues**

#### 14. Compacted soils & bare soil increase

- Soil compaction is evident at the frequently used landing sites, along multiple access trails and in the area near the homestead buildings.

#### 15. Trail and site erosion

- Erosion affects are visible on some sections of trails located on steeper slopes. This occurs primarily on access trails leading up from the landing sites and on the game trails leading up from ravines. The developed nature trail has water bars installed on steep trail sections, but some are in need of repair. Other sections of the lower trail from the Skeeko Bay landing show visible erosion impacts.

### **D. Wildlife Issues**

#### 16. Wildlife and habitat protection

- Currently there is no evidence that habitat for wildlife has deteriorated.

#### 17. Disturbance during breeding

- Currently, there is no indication that human disturbance is occurring at unacceptable levels or having any measurable impact. The breeding season coincides with low recreation use periods.

### **E. Public Facilities Issues**

#### 18. Information/Regulatory/Interpretive signing

- Currently, signing of the above types is present at the primary landing sites, where information boards (4'x4') have been constructed, and to a lesser extent at secondary landing areas, where regulations are posted.
- Interpretive signing is present on the landing site info boards and a self-guided brochure has been developed for the designated trail.
- Directional signing has been placed on the designated trail. No other signing is present in the interior of the park.

#### 19. Hiking Trails

- One designated trail has been developed and is maintained. It is approximately a 2-mile loop starting at Skeeko Bay. Starter trails are present at the other primary landing sites. These lead up from the shoreline and stop @ 50-100 yards inland (their purpose is to direct visitors toward or away from a particular area). There are numerous game trails existing over the island often with multiple access trails from one location to another.

#### 21. Sanitation

- A compost toilet has been constructed up the trail from Skeeko Bay. No other public toilet facilities in the park.

#### 23. Docks/Mooring Buoys/ties offs

- None of these are present. Visitors must beach their boats or drop anchor offshore and access via raft or similar craft. However, options may be limited by the Primitive Parks legislation

#### 24. Emergency Facilities (phone/water/etc.)

- None

### **F. Administration**

#### 26. Commercial use

- Some commercial use is occurring. This appears mostly to involve shuttle type services, which are bringing more visitors to the island. It is likely that some guided hiking activities and wildlife photography for commercial purposes are also occurring.

#### 27. Use of volunteers

- FWP currently has no formal program for using volunteers at the island.

#### 28. Cultural/Historical Inventory

- Historical inventories have identified areas of interest such as the Johnson Homestead and Thurber Orchard area and the Hiawatha Lodge (on private property). However, there is no record of significant cultural inventories other than identification of peeled trees in the Skeeko Bay area.

## ***V. MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES***

### **A. CEDAR, BIRD AND O'NEIL ISLANDS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The primary use of the WMAs is for waterfowl habitat protection, particularly during nesting seasons. Public access will not be allowed during the nesting period and the Islands will be signed appropriately at those times. Outside of seasonal closures, recreation use will be permitted on the Islands. Camping will be confined to designated areas.

Following the classification system developed for WHI, the WMA islands will be zoned or classified to meet the goals set for these areas. Unlike Wild Horse Island, because of their limited acreage, the islands were not divided into multiple zones. This draft plan proposes to classify the WMA islands into the following zones:

#### Zone 3 -Semi-natural

- Bird Island
- O'Neil Island

#### Zone 4 - Semi-natural modified

- Cedar Island

#### ***Description of Zones:***

A semi-natural (zone 3) is primarily for the protection of the natural environment. It provides excellent opportunities to experience nature and wildlife and scenic viewing. The number of area encounters with other visitors is low to moderate and the chance of group interaction is minimal. The environmental condition is semi-modified with human impacts confined, but visible from year to year. Management presence is noticeable only at the access points with limited site modification. Trails are present, but are not usually maintained. No facilities are provided except for safety, health and protection of the resource. Signing may be present, but is limited. Staff patrols are infrequent. Typical recreational activities include hiking, primitive camping (no facilities), picnicking, wildlife viewing/photography and outdoor skills development.

## Zone 4

This classification provides opportunities to experience nature and wildlife in a family setting. The environmental condition is semi-modified, with human impacts confined, but visible from year to year. The area is easily accessible with no permanent closures. The level of area encounters may be moderate to high and chances of group interaction may be high during peak seasons. Management is readily apparent and moderate site modifications exist. Trails are developed and maintained. Signing is present and regular staff patrols would occur during the high use season. Facilities may be provided for safety, health, resource protection and convenience for the visitor. Recreational activities may include those found in the previous class plus opportunities for onsite interpretation with the use of interpreters, kiosks or display panels.

The aforementioned two classes are basically the same in regards to environmental condition. However, class 4 permits higher social standards where more people or larger groups may be encountered. Additionally, a class 4 area may focus on management provided interpretation and environmental education opportunities for the general public and school groups, whereas a class 3 would focus on self-discovery experiences. It should be noted that what is allowed in a particular zone, does not mean it will always be present. But there is more flexibility in management options as the classification number increases. The higher the classification, the higher the standard for acceptable impacts.

If the LAC framework with zoning is applied to the WMA islands as proposed, the result is a consistent management approach to resource protection and recreation opportunity for all FWP managed islands.

### **WMA Islands Management Actions**

1. Integrate recreation and wildlife management strategies into island management. This includes seasonal visitor closures for waterfowl protection.
2. Address the Cedar Island homestead hazards. Consider the following strategies:
  - a. Fence the homestead area to limit or prohibit access.
  - b. Educate the public about hazards of the homestead through literature and signing.
  - c. Dismantle and remove the house and other unsafe structures from the island.

3. Implement signage on the islands to address over-use issues through low-impact techniques and information and regulations pertaining to the islands.
4. Manage use of the Zelezny access by posting signs and designating the site as day use only. Manage it similarly to fishing access sites. Remove the dock constructed by the local property owner.
5. Remove obstructions from the shoreline at landing sites to ensure safe landings.
6. Work with Tribal entities to complete cultural and historic site inventories.
7. Develop a designated trail on Cedar Island and obliterate unnecessary braided trails.
8. Develop and implement a weed management plan for the islands.
9. Designate O'Neil Island as day use only. Allow for use of propane stoves only. No open fires.
10. Designate campsites on Cedar and Bird Island to limit proliferation of sites and reduce overall impacts (camping allowed only at designated sites). Establish campsite criteria such as number of sites, setbacks from shoreline and occupancy limits for designated sites.
11. Prohibit open fires, but allow propane stoves only in designated areas on Cedar Island. Allow propane stoves only along the shoreline (not more than 5 feet inland from the high water mark) on Bird Island.
12. Establish additional use guidelines for all users, including commercial users, if and when impacts determine the need.
13. Develop and distribute interpretive, educational and informational brochures describing the uniqueness of each island.
14. Determine the appropriate level of facility development for the islands and establish these levels in a written document.
15. Establish maximum group size limits, without a permit.
16. Prohibit pets on Bird and O'Neil Islands. Allow pets on leash on Cedar Island.
17. Develop options for toilet facilities on the Islands and implement the most effective option when feasible.

## **B. WILD HORSE ISLAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Wild Horse Island is a wild place, with Palouse Prairie and dense Montane forest ecosystems. Most of the island is accessible to the public with private residences scattered around its perimeter. Human impacts on the island ecosystem, including vegetation and wildlife, and cultural and historic sites are managed within the “Limits of Acceptable Change” principles.

### **WHI Management Actions**

The planning committee drafted several general management recommendations for the park, as well as recommendations to address specific issues on the island. Based on those recommendations, the following management actions will be established for WHI.

#### **General Management Actions**

1. Set organizational priorities that would allow FWP to implement the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process (see Appendix C for the LAC direction outlined in the 1994 WHI Management Plan). This implementation will include:
  - a. Collection of necessary additional baseline data.
  - b. Develop LAC “standards, indicators, and triggers,” to assure the inclusion of impacts on the natural environment and private property owners as well as on the island visitors’ experience.

#### **Suggested indicators:**

- Overused trails
  - Vegetation loss and bare soil increases due to visitation
  - Vandalism and trespassing on private property
  - Visible trash
  - Interruption in wildlife or waterfowl distribution and use patterns
  - Number and type of visitor encounters per visit
  - Degradation of the health of wildlife populations or wildlife habitat in any of the four zones.
- c. Establish annual priorities and management strategies for implementing LAC on the island.
  2. Maintain the four zones as designated in the 1994 WHI plan to allow different levels of use in each. Establish standards for each zone and apply management strategies to maintain those standards.



### Human-Related Actions

1. Increase island patrols by FWP staff and volunteers to provide better service to park visitors and to educate visitors on park information.
2. Reduce group size limit without a permit from 15 to 12. Limit the number of groups larger than 12 on the island at any one time.
3. Adopt a stronger “no pets” policy on the island.
4. Develop options for another toilet facility location for the future and implement if necessary.
5. Develop management alternatives when LAC indicators are triggered to include but not be limited to:
  - A permit system for all visitors
  - Temporary or permanent closures
  - Time and place regulations
6. Establish additional designated access points.
7. Continue to consider private property and significant wildlife and waterfowl areas when establishing access points.
8. Evaluate access points to reasonably ensure safe public access.
9. Protect the island’s historic buildings through stabilization and visitor education.
10. Allow for use of propane stoves along the shoreline only, not more than 5 feet inland from the high water mark.
11. Conduct an inventory in cooperation with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe (CS&KT), of cultural and historic sites on the island.
12. Establish a new section of designated trail utilizing game trails and minimal directional signing to connect new addition to the current loop trail (see Figure 2).
13. Evaluate and pursue efforts to purchase undeveloped private lots which significantly affect resources or recreational opportunities.

### Vegetation, Soil, and Wildlife Actions

1. Develop a grasslands restoration plan for protection of the Palouse Prairie ecosystem.
2. Develop a forest management plan to maintain the health of the Ponderosa Pine ecosystem.
3. Include a forest fuels management program in the forest management plan.

4. Minimize the occurrence of unwanted human-caused fires through implementation of a comprehensive fire prevention program that includes education and enforcement.
5. Place natural surfacing materials on the trail from Skeeko Bay to the homestead cabin in order to mitigate trail erosion. Include the spur trail to the new toilet.
6. Maintain horse numbers at a maximum of five.

## **ISLANDS COMMERCIAL USE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Advisory Committee was unable to reach consensus on some aspects of the commercial use issue (see Appendix G for Committee discussion related to commercial use of the islands). The following management objectives and alternatives were developed by FWP from the Advisory Committee discussions and recommendations. These actions were developed in order to manage the increased visitation that will result from some types of commercial use of the islands. The management actions will be finalized after the public review process for this plan is complete.

### **Commercial Use Objectives**

1. Regulate commercial use to ensure compliance with established LAC standards (see Management Objective on page 3 of this plan).
2. Coordinate commercial management strategies with Tribal entities. Work with the CS&KT to establish and enforce regulations and rules about commercial use.
3. Develop a permit system to manage and regulate commercial use, which upholds the guiding principles, management goals and objectives for the islands.

### **Commercial Use Actions**

1. Define commercial uses compatible with island management principles and goals.
2. Allow limited commercial use of the islands that includes regulated enforceable management.
3. Develop a permit system to regulate all compatible commercial uses. This system will specify dates, locations, group sizes, and activities.

## ***VI. SUMMARY/CONCLUSION***

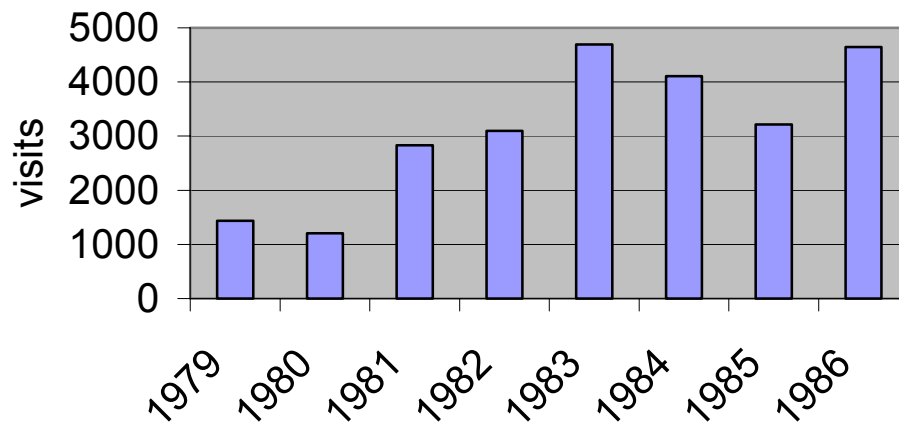
This planning update is a continuation of the planning process initiated in 1978 when Wild Horse Island became a State Park. However, in this instance a new strategy of incorporating all the FWP islands into a consistent management approach has been initiated. Within this document an attempt has been made to resolve the current issues and concerns about the management of all FWP islands and to anticipate future impacts due to their popularity. Flathead Lake is located in a region marked by increasing tourism and growth of the permanent population. These trends and their consequences are a major concern of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. To maintain the islands in as natural a condition as possible will require decisions, which will not always be popular. Efforts have been made to strike a balance between more primitive conditions, as they currently exist on the islands, wildlife habitat considerations, and provisions for compatible recreational opportunities. The management direction presented in this plan update reflects the diversity of the island's resources and focuses on the continuance of healthy ecological systems.

The issues, concerns, and approaches covered in this management update lead to a basic conclusion: Ecosystems are complex systems that are easily altered by the intrusion of human elements. The present components and characteristics of primitive areas evolved in near total absence of people, and, therefore, it is not surprising that in today's world, human presence can have a significant effect on the ecological balance if not properly controlled. This is particularly evident on Wild Horse and Cedar Islands where many of the current resource impacts reflect human related practices that have occurred over the past 80 years. These islands are no longer in as pristine a condition as they once were. Previous uses including ranching, agriculture, introduction of non-indigenous plant species, and past and current cabin development have left their mark. Although we must accept these changes and their effects, these islands remain areas of great natural beauty, and efforts must be made to protect and maintain their value. Through a cooperative effort between the Parks and Wildlife Divisions, and with help from citizen groups, management goals have been developed which will help preserve the attributes of the islands.

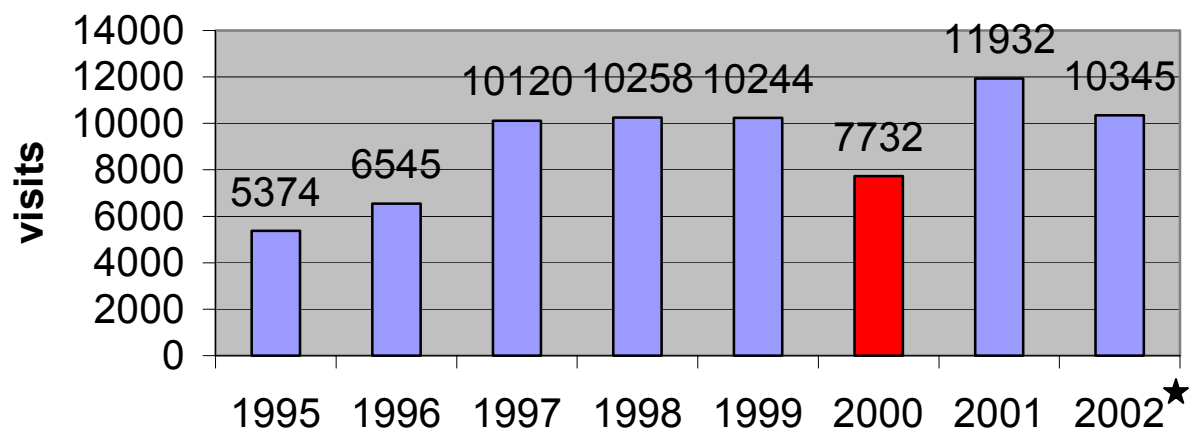
## Appendix A

### WILD HORSE ISLAND VISITATION TREND DATA

1979 - 1986 Visitor Counts For WHI



1995-2001 Visitor Counts For WHI



★ Adjusted Total (explanation below)

■ Fire Closures

## **Where Do the Numbers Come From?**

A landing site registration system serves as the primary visitation data collection tool for WHI. Five preferred landing sites were designated in 1995, two of which (Skeeko Bay & Rocky Bar) received registration boxes that summer. Two more landing sites were equipped with registration boxes in 1996 (East Shore & Driftwood Point) and in 1998 the last landing site (Osprey Cove) had a registration box installed at it.

It was recognized that not all of the visitors that landed at the preferred landing sites would register. Therefore it was necessary to develop a method to estimate the rate of registration compliance. In 1995 an intern, volunteers and the WHI rangers spent time discretely observing the registration box at Skeeko Bay and developed an estimate of the percentage of visitors to that site that registered. In 1995 the registration compliance rate was 44%. In other words, 44% of all parties visiting the island at Skeeko Bay registered. This percentage was then assumed to be representative of the registration rate at all of the preferred landing sites. To achieve an accurate estimate of the total number of parties accessing the island through the preferred landing sites the number of register parties was divided by .44. A sufficient number of parties were observed to, statistically speaking, be 90% confident that this “adjusted visitation level” is within +/- 10% of the actual visitation level.

This “adjusted visitation level”, however, still did not accurately reflect total visitation to the island because boaters are not required to land at one of the preferred landing sites. In fact, a significant number of the island visitors do not access the island through the preferred landing sites and therefore have no opportunity to register. To compensate for this on the days that observers were working Skeeko Bay’s registration box the WHI ranger circled the island by boat and noted the number and location of boats beached on the island at places other than preferred landing sites. This number was then compared to the actual number of parties accessing the island through preferred landing sites on the sample days. It was determined through a sampling process that 35% of all visiting parties landed at locations other than preferred landing sites. Therefore, to get a complete estimate of total visitation to WHI required that the adjusted number of parties at landing sites be divided by .65.

Using the above-described system, in 1998, the registration compliance rate was reassessed along with the percentage of visitors accessing the island through locations other than preferred landing sites. As in 1995 a sufficient number of parties were observed to attain a 90% confidence rate at a +/- 10% margin of error.

### **Data Loss**

One variable that this methodology does not adjust for is the loss of visitor registration sheets. Vandalism at registration boxes has on occasion resulted in the loss of raw data. Registration sheets have either been removed or obliterated, resulting in data “gaps”. In 2002 for example, significant data was lost which resulted in a reported annual visitation of 7,915 total visits. This is markedly lower than 2001 and would lead one to believe that visitation has dramatically declined, even with other factors such as the economy, taken into consideration. However last summer, between July 4, and September 30<sup>th</sup>, an independent visitor count study, based on the methodology that FWP uses for creel count surveys, was conducted. This counting method is considered more accurate than the previous methodology. The reported count for this time period was 8,358 total visits. Consequently, one can reasonably assume that the annual 2002 visitation data acquired from the registration methodology is under-reported. The summer study indicates that visitation for an approximate 3 month period, exceeds that reported for the entire year from registration methods. If the registration data counts for the months not covered by the summer survey were added to that total, then the annual visitation count would be 10,345. The loss of raw registration data has led to inaccuracies of the 2002 visitation count. The inaccuracy is compounded if the data is lost during the high use season when more visitors would have registered in a shorter time period than in the off-seasons. This is due in part to not only the loss of registered visitor raw counts, but also to the application of low compliance rates to the calculation of figures. Low compliance rates will result in higher variations in counts over higher compliance rates when applied to raw data. Therefore even small losses of raw data during peak use periods can have a significant affect on the final calculated figures. Another consideration is that the results of the 2002 summer survey indicate that the factor ratio for boats landing at non-designated sites is closer to .50 rather than the .35 used in previous years. In other words, nearly 50% of all boats land at non-designated areas vs. 35%. Using this newer ratio for 2002 would also result in higher numbers than originally reported.

With the above factors in mind, it is felt that the annual reported data acquired from registration techniques are not valid for reporting 2002 annual visitation, as too much data was lost to accurately reflect true figures. Hence, this data was adjusted with the summer count as described previously and is reflected in the visitation graph for 2002 totals. Even so, one might argue that combining two different methodologies does not make the comparison with previous years data particularly valid. However, it is the only way to more accurately reflect true visitor counts. It would be misleading to accept the 2002 registration data on its own merit. Therefore, the 2002 data as shown in the graph has to be understood with the aforementioned discrepancy in mind.

The conclusion to be drawn is that registration data by itself is too vulnerable to outside influences to be reliable year after year. In years when significant data is lost, trend analysis could lead to erroneous conclusions. Therefore, a new methodology needs to be developed where the data is not subject to these outside variables. A suggestion has been made to use a combination of data methodologies where the newer method is used during the high use season, which covers approximately the period from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The rest of the years' data collection could rely on registration methods. Utilizing the newer method during peak times would reduce the risk of data loss, when that loss is most critical. Registration data could still be utilized during the low use season and even if vandalized, is less likely to have as great an influence on total counts. Unfortunately, the difficulty with the newer method is that it is more labor intensive. If the same summer study methodology is used, a person makes counts on randomly selected days and hours during each 2-week period throughout the summer. This can mean counting five times a day during a specified timeframe and 3-4 days in a 2 week period. If randomly selected times happen to be spread throughout a 12 hour time period, then staff scheduling becomes somewhat problematic. Additionally, randomly selected days can make it difficult for a staff person to have consistent days off. A "light version" with fewer selected days and times would help. The resulting data would not be as accurate, but may still be more so than previous methods. Another idea is to perform the study once every other year, or once every three years, which although it would not report annual data, would still result in valuable trend data over time. Nevertheless, a new data collection method needs to be explored as we move forward.



**Appendix B**

No. \_\_\_\_\_

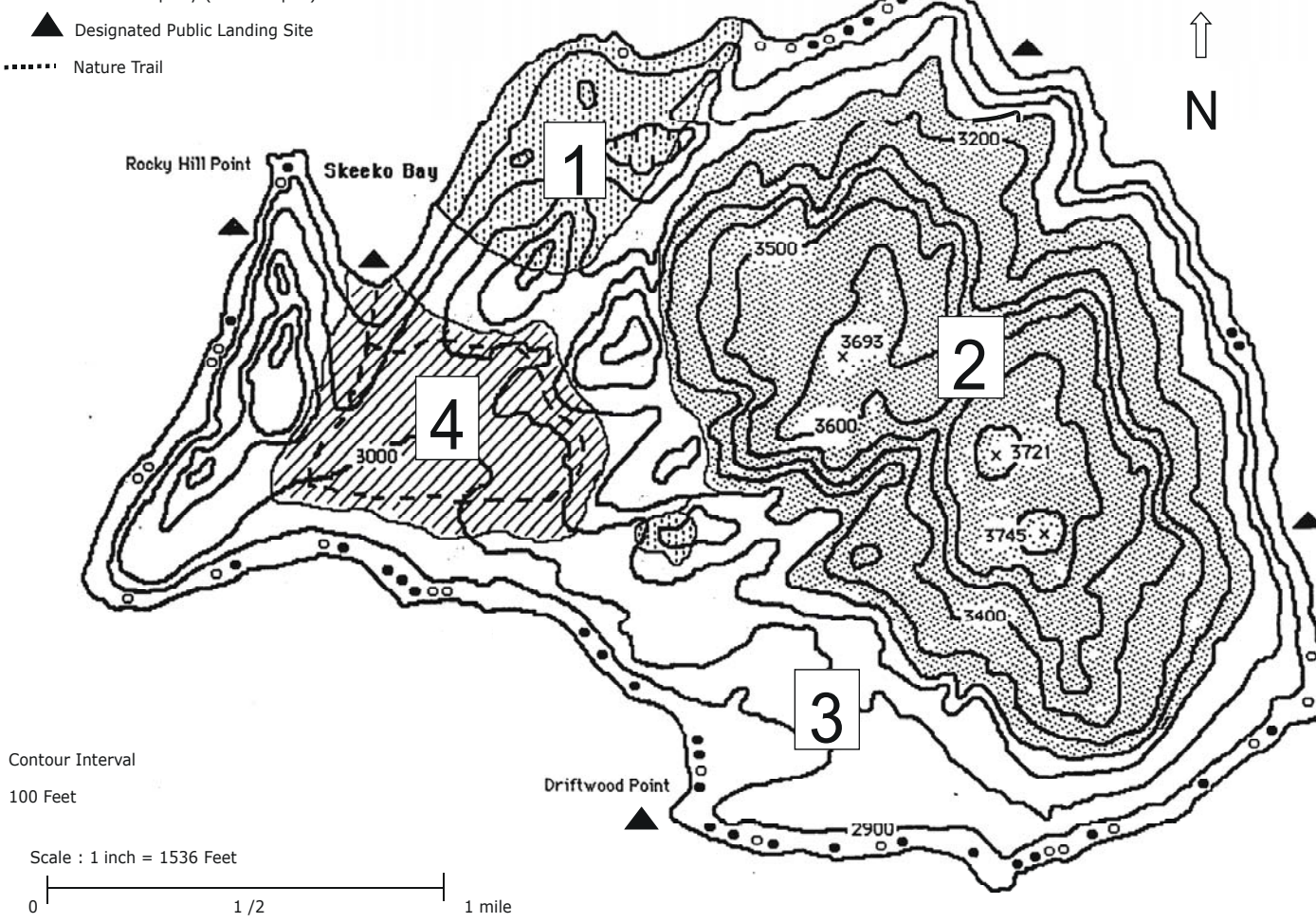
**2002 Survey of Wild Horse Island State Park  
Visitors**

Several questions in this survey ask about your recent trip to Wild Horse Island State Park when you were interviewed on:

\_\_\_\_\_

Wild Horse Island Management Zones

- Special Resource (zone 1)
- Natural (zone 2)
- Semi-Natural (zone 3)
- Semi-Natural Modified (zone 4)
- Private Property (developed)
- Private Property (undeveloped)
- Designated Public Landing Site
- Nature Trail



## Preliminary Results

N – number of survey respondents

1. **What type of group were you with on the trip to Wild Horse Island State Park when you were interviewed?**  
(check only one)

N=95

2.1% ☐ **Alone**  
91.6% ☐ **Family and/or friends**  
6.3% ☐ **Organized group or club**  
0% ☐ **Other:**

---

(please specify)

2. **Did you spend any time recreating in the PARK INTERIOR (e.g., walk or hike at least 100 yards inland away from the shoreline)?** (check only one)

N= 95

13.9 % ☐ **NO** (Go to question 11)  
86.3% ☐ **YES**

3. **In what area of the park did you spend the MOST TIME recreating in the PARK INTERIOR? When answering this question, please refer to the map on the inside cover of this questionnaire.** (check only one)

N=75

8.0% ☐ **Area 1**  
24.0% ☐ **Area 2**  
14.7% ☐ **Area 3**  
53.3% ☐ **Area 4**



PLEASE REFER TO THIS AREA  
OF THE PARK WHEN  
COMPLETING QUESTIONS 4-10

4. **Please estimate how many hours (or parts of an hour) you spent recreating in the PARK INTERIOR.**

N= 80

Mean = 2.3 hrs. \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)  
Median= 2.0 hrs.

5. **Excluding the people in your group, about how many other PEOPLE did you see during the time you were recreating in the PARK INTERIOR?**

N=80

\_\_\_\_\_ (total number of people seen).....How many of these people  
Mean = 3.9 people/hr. did you see within about  
Median = 2.5 50 yards of yourself or less?..... \_\_\_\_\_  
(people)

6. **How did you feel about the number of other people you saw while recreating in the PARK INTERIOR?**

		Check only one for the			Check only one for the
		<u>total number of people seen:</u>			<u>number of people</u>
		<u>yards of yourself or less:</u>			<u>seen within about 50</u>
		%		%	
N=75	1.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Disliked very much	1.4	<input type="checkbox"/> Disliked very much	
	4.0	<input type="checkbox"/> Disliked somewhat	4.1	<input type="checkbox"/> Disliked somewhat	
	58.7	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither disliked or liked	60.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither disliked or liked	
	10.7	<input type="checkbox"/> Liked somewhat	9.6	<input type="checkbox"/> Liked somewhat	
	25.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Liked very much	2.4	<input type="checkbox"/> Liked very much	

7. If you disliked seeing other people while recreating in the PARK INTERIOR, what was it about the presence of other people that made you feel that way? (check all that apply)

- ☐ The total number of people seen was too many
- \*Not enough people ☐ The number of people seen within about 50 yards of myself or less was too many
- disliked seeing other people (insufficient data) ☐ The presence of large groups of people....How would you define a large group of people? \_\_\_\_\_ (number of people)
- ☐ Something else: \_\_\_\_\_

(please specify)

8. Before your trip, did you expect to see more, about the same number, or fewer people than what you actually saw during the time you were recreating in the park interior?

		Check only one for the			Check only one
		<u>for the number of people</u>			<u>seen within about 50</u>
		<u>total number of people seen:</u>			<u>yards of yourself or less:</u>
		%		%	
N=77	22.1	<input type="checkbox"/> More	17.8	<input type="checkbox"/> More	
	42.9	<input type="checkbox"/> About the same	46.6	<input type="checkbox"/> About the same	
	11.7	<input type="checkbox"/> Fewer	12.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Fewer	
	23.4	<input type="checkbox"/> I didn't know what to expect	23.3	<input type="checkbox"/> I didn't know what to expect	

9. What do you think would have been the maximum total number of other people that would have been acceptable to see without feeling too crowded during the time you were recreating in the PARK INTERIOR? (enter a number or check one of the boxes below)

50% - Mean=10.4 people \_\_\_\_\_ (maximum total number of people to see)

N=76 Median= 5.5

-OR-

- 28.9% ☐ I feel the number of other people to see is important, but I am not able to give a maximum number that I think is acceptable
- 21.1% ☐ It wouldn't matter to me how many other people I saw

10. What do you think would have been the maximum number of other people that would have been acceptable to see *within about 50 yards of yourself or less* **without feeling too crowded** during the time you were recreating in the **PARK INTERIOR?** (enter a number or check one of the boxes below)

52.7% - mean=5.5 people/hr \_\_\_\_\_ (maximum number of people to see within about 50 yards of yourself  
median=2.5 or less)

N=76

-OR-

27.6% ☐ I feel the number of other people to see is important, but I am not able to give a maximum number that I think is acceptable

19.7 % ☐ It wouldn't matter to me how many other people I saw

11. Information about your perceptions of the park conditions you may have experienced during your *recent trip* to Wild Horse Island State Park when you were interviewed would be helpful to park managers. In your opinion, how acceptable or unacceptable were the following conditions at the park? (Circle only one number for each condition *or* check the "I don't know/not applicable" box if you don't know or if a particular condition does not apply to you)

DURING YOUR RECENT TRIP, how acceptable or unacceptable was:		Very unacceptable	Unacceptable	Neither acceptable or unacceptable	Acceptable	Very acceptable	I don't know / not applicable
		0%	2.2	7.7	48.4	41.8%	
		1	2	3	4	5	
Overall, the number of people on the island	N=91						
The number of people (and their boats) at public access points	N=92	0%	4.3	9.8	62.0	23.9%	
		1	2	3	4	5	
The number of people (and their boats) recreating along the shoreline	N=93	0%	2.2	8.6	62.4	26.9%	
		1	2	3	4	5	
The number of people recreating in the island interior (e.g., hiking, walking, recreating at least 100 yards inland away from the shoreline)	N=84	0%	3.6	3.6	48.8	44.0%	
		1	2	3	4	5	
Overall, the amount of human-caused impacts to natural resources on the island	N=92	2.2%	6.5	7.6	56.5	27.2%	
		1	2	3	4	5	
The amount of human-caused impacts to natural resources at public access points	N=92	2.2%	6.5	10.9	56.5	23.9%	
			1	2	3	4	5
The amount of human-caused impacts to natural resources found along the	N=89	3.4%	5.6	6.7	58.4	25.8%	

shoreline

			1	2	3	4	5
The amount of human-caused impacts to natural resources in the island interior	N=81	2.5%	3.7	6.2	54.3	33.3%	
			1	2	3	4	5
The relatively limited number of designated hiking trails on the island	N=90	1.1%	3.3	13.3	50.0	32.2%	
			1	2	3	4	5
The relatively limited number of signs (informational and directional) on the island	N=88	0%	6.8	11.4	52.3	29.5%	
			1	2	3	4	5
The relatively limited number of toilet facilities on the island	N=86	12.8%	20.9	14.0	30.2	22.1%	
			1	2	3	4	5
The lack of boat docks at public access points	N=95	5.3%	13.7	14.7	36.8	29.5%	
			1	2	3	4	5
The quality of signs (informational and directional) on the island	N=89	2.2%	4.5	12.4	56.2	24.7%	
			1	2	3	4	5
The number of island users who were being too noisy	N=74	1.4%	5.4	13.5	50.0	29.7%	
			1	2	3	4	5
The number of island users who were partying and/or drinking alcohol	N=63	1.6%	0	14.3	49.2	34.9%	
			1	2	3	4	5

Each of the following topics below make reference to practices that are definitely unacceptable. However, when responding to these topics, think only in terms of whether or not the NUMBER or AMOUNT is acceptable or unacceptable:

Overall, the amount of litter on the island	N=90	4.4%	4.4	5.6	51.1	34.4%	
			1	2	3	4	5
The amount of litter at public access points	N=92	4.3%	8.7	8.7	45.7	32.6%	
			1	2	3	4	5
The amount of litter along the shoreline	N= 93	4.3%	8.6	6.5	50.5	30.1%	
			1	2	3	4	5
The amount of litter in the island interior	N=84	4.8%	2.4	4.8	48.8	39.3%	
			1	2	3	4	5

## 11. (continued)

DURING YOUR RECENT TRIP, how acceptable or unacceptable was:

\_\_\_\_\_

Each of the following topics below make reference to practices that are definitely unacceptable. However, when responding to these topics, think only in terms of whether or not the NUMBER or AMOUNT is acceptable or unacceptable:

The amount of human body waste (human feces) and toilet paper at public	N=78	10.3%	9.0	10.3	42.3	28.2%	
---	------	-------	-----	------	------	-------	--

Very unacceptable  
Unacceptable  
Neither acceptable  
or unacceptable  
Acceptable  
Very acceptable  
I don't know / not  
applicable

access points

1 2 3 4 5

The amount of human body waste (human feces) and toilet paper along the shoreline

N=79 7.6% 11.4 10.1 44.3 26.6%

1 2 3 4 5

The amount of human body waste (human feces) and toilet paper in the island interior

N=68 8.8% 10.3 8.8 42.6 29.4%

1 2 3 4 5

Other park conditions:

(please specify)

12. How well do the following statements describe your feelings about the current rules and regulations pertaining to recreational use of Wild Horse Island State Park? (Circle the number that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement or check the “I don’t know” box if you don’t know).

Statement:		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
The current group size restriction of no more than 15 people per group is acceptable to me	N=91	6.6%	11.0	6.6	45.1	30.8%	
I think the current group size restriction should be increased -- more than 15 people per group should be allowed on the island	N=91	36.3%	42.9	12.1	3.3	5.5%	
I think the current group size restriction should be decreased -- fewer than 15 people per group should be allowed on the island	N=88	13.6%	37.5	22.7	9.1	17.0%	
The current regulation that prohibits pets on the island is acceptable to me	N=94	3.2%	9.6	1.1	35.1	51.1%	
I believe pets should be allowed on the island as long as their owners are required to keep them on a leash at all times	N=92	40.2%	32.6	5.4	14.1	7.6%	
The current regulation that prohibits overnight camping on the island is acceptable to me	N=94	4.3%	19.1	9.6	30.9	36.2%	
I believe overnight camping should be allowed on the island at designated camping locations	N= 92	30.4%	27.2	7.6	25.0	9.8%	

## 12. continued

<u>Statement:</u>		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
		1	2	3	4	5	
The current regulation prohibiting the use of mountain bikes on the island is acceptable to me	N= 95	0%	7.4	4.2	35.8	52.6%	
I think visitors should be allowed to use mountain bikes while visiting the island.	N=93	51.6%	37.6	2.2	7.5	1.1%	
The current regulation prohibiting island visitors from using any type of fire on the island is acceptable to me.	N= 93	0%	5.4	6.5	33.3	54.8%	
I think island visitors should be allowed to use propane gas stoves along the shoreline.	N=93	31.2%	20.4	7.5	29.0	11.8%	

## 13. To what extent do you support or oppose businesses offering shuttle services to the island for a fee? (check only one)

N= 94	42.6%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly oppose
	12.8%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oppose
	22.3%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither support nor oppose
	18.1%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support
	4.3%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly support

Why do you support or oppose?

---

## 14. To what extent do you support or oppose businesses offering guided tours of the island for a fee? (check only one)

N= 94	47.9%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly oppose
	16.0%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oppose
	22.3%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither support nor oppose
	11.7%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support
	2.1%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly support

Why do you support or oppose?

---

## 15. How did you get to Wild Horse Island State Park on the trip to the park when you were interviewed? (check only one)

N=94	3.2 %	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paid for a shuttle service
	11.7%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rented a watercraft (e.g., boat, canoe, kayak, etc.)
	85.1%	<input type="checkbox"/>	My own or someone else's watercraft (e.g., boat, canoe, kayak, etc.)



16. On a scale from 1 to 9, how would you rate your overall experience at Wild Horse Island State Park on the trip to the park when you were interviewed? (circle the number that best describes your experience)

	Poor									Excellent		
N=95	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		Mean= 8.1	
	0%	0	1.1	0	2.1	2.1	21.1	26.3	47.4%		Median=8.0	

17. About how many separate trips (EVER) have you taken to Wild Horse Island State park during the peak summer use season (July – September)? (check only one)

	22.1%	<input type="checkbox"/>	The trip when I was interviewed was my first
N=95	30.5%	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 - 4 trips
	15.8%	<input type="checkbox"/>	5 - 10 trips
	31.6%	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 10 trips

18. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ (years) Mean= 49.7 years

N=95 Median=50.0 years

19. What is your gender? ☐ Female ☐ Male

N=95 44.2% 55.8%

20. Are you a current resident of Montana? (check only one)

N=95	30.5%	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
	69.5%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes.....If yes, how many years have you lived in Montana? _____ (years)
			Mean=29.8 years
			Median=30.0

21. Do you have a residence on Wild Horse Island? (check only one)

N=95	98.9%	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
	1.1%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

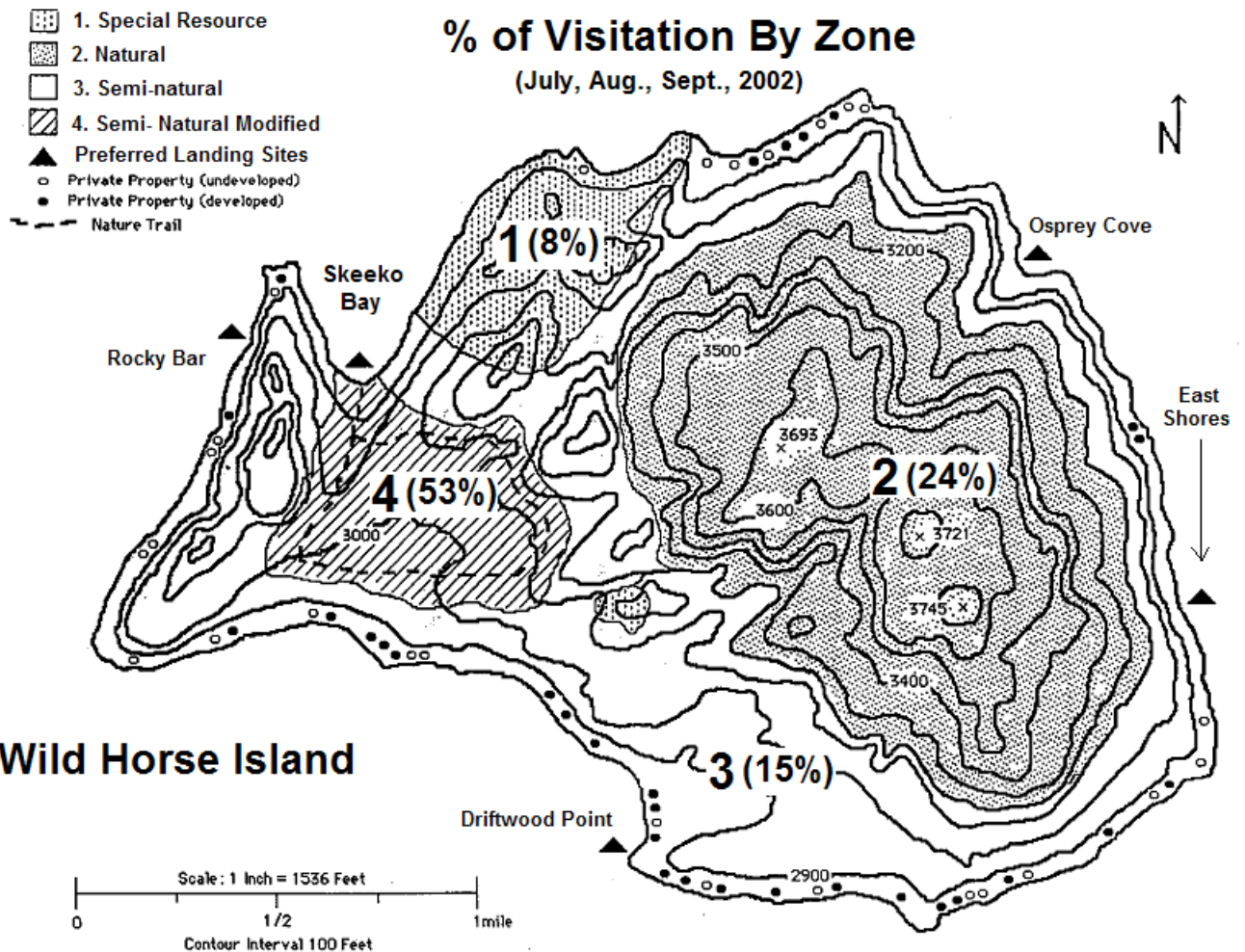
22. Do you have a residence on Flathead Lake? (check only one)

N=95	66.3%	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
	33.7%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Please return this questionnaire using the enclosed postage paid envelope.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Responsive Management Unit  
1420 East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701



\*Percentages represent only those who were surveyed and do not necessarily indicate exact total visitor distribution.

## Verbatim Comments/Question 13 - Summary of individual comments from survey respondents

Wild Horse Island State Park Visitor

*To what extent do you support or oppose businesses offering shuttle services to the island for a fee?*

## Support

- Park should be available to all taxpayers, not only those local boat owners
- Public right to access to state park
- People without boats should have equal access and if someone can create jobs for Montanans at the same time, more power to them.
- The island is over 2000 acres. A large resource that can be used a lot more than it is.
- I think there should be access to those without a boat, but use should be dispersed and perhaps limited to a maximum number per day.
- Maybe someone doesn't have the means to tour the island any other way.
- The island is a treasure and allowing small groups of tourists wouldn't hurt it but would greatly enhance their visit to Montana.
- As long as they are small groups under 10.
- Good for local economy
- I believe the island is under used, and this helps people who could not afford boats.
- Only if there was no more human impact on the island.
- Allow access to low to medium income people as well as tourists.
- Some people have no transportation and wouldn't be able to visit the island.
- Enable people without access to a boat enjoy the island.
- It's a public place and not everyone has access to a boat.
- So all people can enjoy the islands, not just the ones with boats.
- Proper use of tourism educates clients and promotes Montana business.
- It is a beautiful place and if the businesses paid a fee perhaps there could be more facilities on the shoreline and trails in the interior.

## Oppose

- Makes the island too commercial. Would ruin the spot.
- It's important to keep WHI pristine as possible, for as long as possible. I am opposed to dollars profit leading to increased degradation of a

wonderful natural resource.

- Too much land and water traffic.
- Leave the island in most primitive state. Shuttles bring more waste, noise, destruction of habitat and need for more docking areas.
- They will monopolize the island and large groups are a hindrance/annoyance to smaller groups trying to pass by.
- I feel this would cause the loss of the solitude and peace of the island and cause over-crowding.
- Increased traffic. Lack of landing spots.
- Private boats or watercraft acceptable.
- Don't want to open the island up to that "market" or that many people.
- Commercializing the island will ruin its beauty
- Anyone with a boat can visit the island. No need for commercial operators.
- I do not want it to be a commercial place with lots of tourists.
- It helps limit the number of visitors to the island.
- I feel this will distract from the quietness.
- There are enough other attractions that can bear more people. Let's not over-load the island.
- The island doesn't need that kind of impact.
- It will get too commercial
- I think WHI should remain wild.
- Would create too much of a tourist business and too high an impact.
- Some tourists feel free to litter when they are on short trips.
- It would require "improvements".
- There is potential for too much impact - overcrowding. Restricted party size and restricted hours for businesses would be necessary for me to change my opinion.
- Too much use
- Impact would be greater than occasional visitors.
- Whatever rules that limit human use of the island, I like.

- Shuttle services would bring a lot of people who wouldn't keep the park natural and clean.
- Dropping large numbers off for a day will lead to overuse and abuse.
- Would bring too many people to the island, more litter, more problems.
- WHI is not a zoo. It should have little or no commercial use.
- I feel the island should be left as is. WHI should NOT be commercialized.
- It would totally change the attraction of hiking on the island. For me, to encounter groups of people everywhere. I feel the island wildlife would suffer.
- It could increase the crowd too much. There are plenty of boat rentals available for those that want to see the island.
- May lead to too many people on the island, especially waiting for shuttle.
- I like the island's inaccessibility.
- This should not be commercialized.
- Minimize commercialization
- Would ruin environment, which is special
- No easy place to dock.
- Because as with most other things in the state, they would get priority over the private citizen.
- Could over-use the property - traffic is dense enough now.
- The island would quickly become "people stressed".
- Keep it less commercialized.
- I feel businesses should not profit. The island should.
- It might be ok if groups were kept small less than 5.
- More people more impact.
- Increased size of groups, negative impact on island.
- Increased human impact, do not want to see the island used in any commercial way

## Verbatim Comments/Question 14 - Summary of individual comments from survey respondents

### Wild Horse Island State Park Visitors

*To what extent do you support or oppose businesses offering guided tours of the island for a fee?*

#### **Support**

- Tourists and recreation have got to replace some of the dollars lost from logging and mining. Not all Montanans can make a living doing studies for the university or the state.
- **Good opportunity to learn more about the area and provide some employment.**
- **As long as it is controlled to a maximum one hours, maximum one day.**
- **The island is a treasure and letting people have access would enhance their visit to Montana.**
- **Groups must be small.**
- **I would enjoy a tour and info on history of island.**
- **These groups are usually well planned and educational.**
- **Allows access to low and medium income people and to tourists**
- **If the service is provided, the provider deserves compensation.**
- Rather have a group monitored than have inexperienced people walking around that might do something stupid.
- **Tourism educates clients and promotes Montana business**

#### **Oppose**

- **Too commercial**
- **The fact that it takes some effort to get there enhances the enjoyment. Let's leave a few places for the people who will make the effort.**
- **Takes away from the seclusion of the island.**
- **Leave the "Wild" in Wild Horse**
- **Island isn't large enough to warrant this service and needs to be kept natural.**
- **I like the uniqueness of being out in the wilderness and not seeing guided**

**groups.**

- **They will be taking people out to the island that do not belong there because they will go ill-equipped, such as improper walking shoes and will not understand the need to prevent littering.**
- **Based on my experience in wilderness areas, outfitters and guides seem to acquire a sense of entitlement after a while.**
- **Do not want too much growth.**
- **Don't want to open the island up to that "market" or that many people.**
- **Commercializing the island will ruin its beauty          Too many people**
- **I don't want it to be a commercial place with lots of tourists.**
- **It would affect the natural sense of discovery by each person. Maps could be improved perhaps to guide visitors more specifically.**
- **There would be too many people on the island.**
- **I feel this will distract from the quietness.**
- **Could result in enforcement problems and negatively impact the island.**
- **It's great as a self guided island and the pamphlets are explanatory.**
- **It gets too commercial and over-crowded.**
- **I don't think guided tours are needed. Being able to read about and discover the natural environment for one's self is really neat.**
- **It doesn't seem right for individuals to profit from a State Park.**
- **Too much impact.**
- **Guided tours would ruin the peacefulness of the island.**
- **I think it will disturb the environment.**
- **It might cause too much congestion and damage to the natural resources.**
- **Becomes too commercialized.**
- **Too many people.**
- **Your information is great and can be followed easily. Impact on the island would be affected, too. Need for restroom, water, etc., would be needed.**
- **WHI should never serve as a source of business dollars.**

- **Paying for a tour would mean we wouldn't be able to stop for as long as we wanted. I like time to enjoy nature.**
- **Large number will lead to overuse and abuse.**
- **Congestion. Commercialization is not acceptable to me.**
- **Too many people, too much litter, more problems.**
- **Some places need to be kept sacred and as wild and natural as possible.**
- **Guided tours would bring too many people.**
- **A few shouldn't profit. It would change the attraction of hiking on the island.**
- **Minimize Commercialization**
- **There are many other places in the region where these kinds of businesses can operate. Let's keep this island special.**
- **So we can experience the island in its natural state, not with tours going on around us.**
- **Should not be commercialized.**
- **Would ruin environment, which is special**
- **Do not commercialize**
- **Groups get priority over the private citizen**
- **Could over-use property**
- **Too many people, too much competition.**
- **Keep it less commercial.**
- **The island should benefit, not business.**
- **Too commercial**
- **More people more impact.**
- **Increased size of groups, negative impact on island.**
- **Increased human impact, do not want to see the island used in any commercial way.**
- **I would not like to see groups of people on the island**



No. \_\_\_\_\_

## **2002 Survey of Flathead Lake Island Visitors**

Several questions in this survey ask about your recent trip to Flathead Lake when you were interviewed on:

\_\_\_\_\_

**(Date)**

On \_\_\_\_\_ Island

**1. What type of group were you with on the trip to the Flathead Lake island where you were interviewed?**

(check only one)

N= 29

- 0% ☐ Alone  
 96.6% ☐ Family and/or friends  
 3.4% ☐ Organized group or club  
 0% ☐ Other:

(please specify)

**2. Please estimate how many hours (or parts of an hour) you spent recreating on the Flathead Lake island where you were interviewed.**

N=29

\_\_\_\_\_ (hours) Mean=6.9 hrs.  
 Median=3.0

**3. Excluding the people in your group, about how many other PEOPLE did you see during the time you were recreating on this island?**

N=29

\_\_\_\_\_ (total number of people seen).....How many of these people  
 Mean=1.7 people/hr. did you see within about  
 Median=1.0 50 yards of yourself or less?.....  
 (people)  
 Mean=1.1 people/hr  
 Median=0.25

**4. How did you feel about the number of other people you saw while recreating on this island?**

Check only one for the  
 only one for the number of people  
total number of people seen:  
about 50 yards of yourself or less:

Check

seen within

N=27

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 0% <input type="checkbox"/> Disliked very much           | 8.0% <input type="checkbox"/> Disliked very much       |
| 14.8% <input type="checkbox"/> Disliked somewhat         | 12.0% <input type="checkbox"/> Disliked somewhat       |
| 55.6% <input type="checkbox"/> Neither disliked or liked | 56% <input type="checkbox"/> Neither disliked or liked |
| 7.4% <input type="checkbox"/> Liked somewhat             | 4% <input type="checkbox"/> Liked somewhat             |
| 22.2% <input type="checkbox"/> Liked very much           | 20.0% <input type="checkbox"/> Liked very much         |

**5. If you disliked seeing other people while recreating on this island, what was it about the presence of other people that made you feel that way? (check all that apply)**

- ☐ The total number of people seen was too many  
☐ The number of people seen within about 50 yards of myself or less was too many

Insufficient data ☐ The presence of large groups of people....How would you define a large group of people? \_\_\_\_\_ (number of people)

\*All who disliked, marked this box. ☐ ☐ Something else:

(please specify)

6. Before your trip, did you expect to see more, about the same number, or fewer people than what you actually saw during the time you were recreating on this island?

Check only one for the only one for the number of people total number of people seen:

Check

seen within about 50 yards of yourself or less:

N=29	24.1% <input type="checkbox"/> More	16.0% <input type="checkbox"/> More
	41.4% <input type="checkbox"/> About the same	60.0% <input type="checkbox"/> About the same
	13.8% <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer	12.0% <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer
	20.0% <input type="checkbox"/> I didn't know what to expect	12.0% <input type="checkbox"/> I didn't know what to expect

7. What do you think would have been the maximum total number of other people that would have been acceptable to see without feeling too crowded during the time you were recreating on this island? (enter a number or check one of the boxes below)

64.3% \_\_\_\_\_ (maximum total number of people to see)

N=28

-OR-

25% ☐ I feel the number of other people to see is important, but I am not able to give a maximum number that I think is acceptable

10.7% ☐ It wouldn't matter to me how many other people I saw

8. What do you think would have been the maximum number of other people that would have been acceptable to see *within about 50 yards of yourself or less* without feeling too crowded during the time you were recreating on this island? (enter a number or check one of the boxes below)

Mean= 2.1 people/hr. Median= 1.25 (N=21)

75% \_\_\_\_\_ (maximum number of people to see within about 50 yards of yourself or less)

N=28

-OR-

17.9% ☐ I feel the number of other people to see is important, but I am not able to give a maximum number that I think is acceptable

7.1% ☐ It wouldn't matter to me how many other people I saw

- 11. Information about your perceptions of the conditions you may have experienced during your recent trip to the Flathead Lake island where you were interviewed would be helpful to managers. In your opinion, how acceptable or unacceptable were the following conditions on this island?**  
(Circle only one number for each condition *or check the “I don’t know/not applicable” box if you don’t know or if a particular condition does not apply to you*)

<u>DURING YOUR RECENT TRIP, how acceptable or unacceptable was:</u>			Very unacceptable	Unacceptable	Neither acceptable or unacceptable	Acceptable	Very acceptable	I don't know / not applicable
			1	2	3	4	5	
Overall, the number of people on the island	N=28		3.6%	7.1	14.3	42.9	32.1%	
The number of people (and their boats) at public access points	N=27		3.7%	3.7	14.8	37.0	40.7%	
<b>9. (continued)</b>								
<u>DURING YOUR RECENT TRIP, how acceptable or unacceptable was:</u>			Very unacceptable	Unacceptable	Neither acceptable or unacceptable	Acceptable	Very acceptable	I don't know / not applicable
			1	2	3	4	5	
The number of people (and their boats) recreating along the shoreline	N=25		4.0%	0.0	4.0	48.0	44.0%	
The number of people recreating in the island interior			3.4%	6.9	6.9	51.7	31.0%	
			1	2	3	4	5	
Overall, the amount of human-caused impacts to natural resources on the island	N=29		3.4%	10.3	3.4	48.3	34.5%	
			1	2	3	4	5	
The amount of human-caused impacts to natural resources at public access points	N=23		4.3%	13.0	8.7	43.5	30.4%	
			1	2	3	4	5	
The lack of designated hiking trails on the island			11.1%	7.4	11.1	40.7	29.6%	
			1	2	3	4	5	
The lack of signs (informational and directional) on the island interior	N= 26		3.8%	3.8	15.4	38.5	38.5%	
The lack of toilet facilities on the island			14.8%	18.5	11.1	29.6	25.9%	
	N=27		1	2	3	4	5	
The lack of boat docks at public access points	N=29		0.0%	6.9	6.9	51.7	34.5%	
			1	2	3	4	5	
			4.5%	0.0	13.6	36.4	45.5%	

The number of island users who were being too noisy	N=22	1	2	3	4	5
		4.8%	0.0	0.0	47.6	47.6%
The number of island users who were partying and/or drinking alcohol	N=21	1	2	3	4	5

Each of the following topics below make reference to practices that are definitely unacceptable. However, when responding to these topics, think only in terms of whether or not the NUMBER or AMOUNT is acceptable or unacceptable:

Overall, the amount of litter on the island	N=27	0.0%	0.0	11.1	48.1	40.7%
		1	2	3	4	5
The amount of litter along the shoreline	N=28	0.0%	7.1	7.1	42.9	42.9%
		1	2	3	4	5
The amount of litter in the island interior	N=23	4.3%	4.3	17.4	34.8	39.1%
		1	2	3	4	5
The amount of human body waste (human feces) and toilet paper along the shoreline	N=27	44.4	7.4%	14.8	11.1	22.2
		1	2	3	4	5
The amount of human body waste (human feces) and toilet paper in the island interior	N=22		13.6%	22.7	9.1	22.7 31.8%
			1	2	3	4 5

Other park conditions:

(please specify)

**10. Currently, there are no formal rules or regulations pertaining to recreational use of FWP Flathead Lake islands where you were interviewed. Given your perceptions of the conditions you encountered on the island where you were interviewed, how do you feel about each of the following hypothetical management actions?** (circle only one number for each action)

10. (continued)

Hypothetical Management Action :		Very unacceptable	Unacceptable	Neither acceptable or unacceptable	Acceptable	Very acceptable	I don't know / not applicable
Establish a group size limit (e.g. place limit on the number of people allowed per group visiting the island)	N=27	22.2%	40.7	11.1	22.2	3.7%	
		1	2	3	4	5	
Prohibit pets on island.	N=29	31.0%	31.0	10.3	10.3	17.2%	
		1	2	3	4	5	

Allow pets on the island as long as their owners are required to keep them on a leash at all times.	N=27	18.5%	14.8	7.4	51.9	7.4%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Prohibit overnight camping on the islands.	N=29	31.0	27.6	3.4	27.6	10.3%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Allow overnight camping on the island at designated camping locations only.	N=29	24.1%	17.2	13.8	41.4	3.4%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Prohibit the use of mountain bikes on the island	N=29	3.4%	20.7	20.7	24.1	31.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Prohibit the use of any type of fire on the island	N=29	20.7%	24.1	13.8	20.7	20.7%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Allow the use of propane gas stoves along the shoreline.	N=29	13.8%	13.8	31.0	41.4	0.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

11. To what extent do you support or oppose businesses offering shuttle services to this island for a fee? (check only one)

N=29

62.1% ☐ Strongly oppose

20.7% ☐ Oppose

10.3% ☐ Neither support nor oppose

3.4% ☐ Support

3.4% ☐ Strongly support

Why do you support or oppose?

---

12. To what extent do you support or oppose businesses offering guided tours of this island for a fee? (check only one)

N=29

69.0% ☐ Strongly oppose

13.8% ☐ Oppose

10.3% ☐ Neither support nor oppose

3.3% ☐ Support

3.4% ☐ Strongly support

Why do you support or oppose?

---

13. How did you get to the Flathead Lake island where you were interviewed? (check only one)

N=29

0% ☐ Paid for a shuttle service

0% ☐ Rented a watercraft (e.g., boat, canoe, kayak, etc.)

100% ☐ My own or someone else's watercraft (e.g., boat, canoe, kayak, etc.)

**14. On a scale from 1 to 9, how would you rate your overall experience on the trip to the Flathead Lake island where you were interviewed?** (circle the number that best describes your experience)

	Poor					Excellent				
N=29	0.0%	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	6.9	31.0	58.6%	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	

**15. About how many separate trips (EVER) have you taken to the Flathead Lake island where you were interviewed during the peak summer use season (July – September)?** (check only one)

N=29	17.2%	<input type="checkbox"/>	The trip when I was interviewed was my first
	37.9%	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 - 4 trips
	24.1%	<input type="checkbox"/>	5 - 10 trips
	20.7%	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 10 trips

**16. What is your age?** \_\_\_\_\_ (years) Mean=45.2 yrs. Median=43.0

**17. What is your gender?** ☐ Female ☐ Male

N=29	55.2%	44.8%
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**18. Are you a current resident of Montana?** (check only one)

N=29	34.5%	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
	65.5%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes.....If yes, how many years have you lived in Montana?
		_____	(years)

**19. Do you have a residence on Flathead Lake?** (check only one)

N=29	51.7%	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
	48.3%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Please return this questionnaire using the enclosed postage paid envelope.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Responsive Management Unit**  
**1420 East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue**  
**P.O. Box 200701**  
**Helena, MT 59620-0701**

## **FLATHEAD LAKE ISLAND VISITORS VERBATIM COMMENTS**

Question 11: To what extent do you support or oppose businesses offering shuttle services to this island for a fee?

### Support

- **Offers new business.**
- **Some visitors would never get to experience the islands if someone didn't offer this service.**

### Oppose

- **Not enough room for any more people.**
- **Would ruin the beauty, "pristine" nature of this island.**
- **We enjoyed the natural beauty and birds coming and going. Believe this natural beauty would be jeopardized with tours.**
- **The island is wild and has limited shoreline.**
- **This would bring large groups and that will destroy them quickly.**
- **It would cause too great an impact on the island and mainland - if limited to 1 private boaters, the numbers of people are naturally limited.**
- **Will increase the pressure on the island.**
- **Too much traffic for the small island and island has no facilities for too many people.**
- **Would not want to see the area commercialized.**
- **It would be overrun because of its small size. It would no longer be totally natural.**
- **Too small**
- **Too small of an island to accommodate large groups of people at one time.**
- **Bird Island is too small to handle commercial use. Wild Horse is already covered with trash, bring in more people and the trash will increase.**



- I strongly oppose because there is very limited areas for families that live all year here to go and enjoy the lake quality.
- Island is too small.
- It will encourage more visitors - day-trippers who don't respect the property as much
- **It's fun to go and play on the island in its natural state. If you're lucky you get to be there by yourself Sometimes you have to share, but everyone has always been respectful.**
- This is a public island and it should remain so. It should not be used for business purposes.
- Because the beautiful island will get trashed.
- It will get destroyed.
- **We don't want to see these islands become commercialized. It's nice to visit the natural condition and getaway and enjoy the natural beauty. These islands have a fair amount of solitude now and then without a lot of people coming and going.**

Question 12: To what extent do you support or oppose businesses offering guided tours of this island for a fee?

### **Support**

- Brings more money and jobs to the area.
- Some visitors would never get to experience the islands if someone didn't offer this service.

### **Oppose**

- Not enough room.
- Would ruin the beauty, pristine nature of the island.

- The natural condition would be jeopardized with tours.
- Nothing to tour on Bird Island.
- Would like to keep them for the locals to use and enjoy.
- Too great an impact on the island - if limited to private boaters, the numbers are naturally limited.
- Will increase the pressure on the island.
- Island not set up for that much traffic.
- **Would not want to see the area commercialized.**
- Again, this island is too small to support tours and this would definitely take away from our visit.
- Too small
- Island too small to accommodate, too large of groups.
- I think the island wildlife would be disturbed by a large increase of people.
- We strongly oppose, there is limited areas families that live all year here to go and enjoy the lake quality.
- **Island is too small.**
- If you have people paying to go to the island, they'll want things changed. And it won't be a little slice of accessible nature anymore.
- People who want to visit Bird Island should do so using their won resources.
- Because there will be a lot of litter. It will get trashed.
- They will trash the island.
- **We probably would not go to these islands if there were a lot of people coming and going all the time. The islands are an added inducement to visit the lake that would not be there, at least for us, if the islands become commercialized.**

No. \_\_\_\_\_

## 2002 Survey of Wild Horse Island Property Owners

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

**Please return this questionnaire using the enclosed postage paid envelope.**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Responsive Management Unit  
1420 East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701**

**12. Information about your perceptions of the park conditions at Wild Horse Island State Park would be helpful to park managers. In your opinion, how acceptable or unacceptable are the following conditions at the park during the summer use season (July – September)?** (Circle only one number for each condition *or check the “I don’t know” box if you don’t know*)

“N” is the number of survey respondents

DURING THE SUMMER USE SEASON (July – September), how acceptable or unacceptable is:		Very unacceptable	Unacceptable	Neither acceptable or unacceptable	Acceptable	Very acceptable	I don’t know
		1	2	3	4	5	
The number of people visiting the island on WEEKENDS [ ]	N=28	0.0%	21.4	28.6	50.0	0.0%	
The number of people visiting the island on WEEKDAYS	N=28	0.0%	3.6	17.9	67.9	10.7%	
The number of people (and their boats) at public access points on WEEKENDS	N=26	3.8%	26.9	19.2	50.0	0.0%	
The number of people (and their boats) at public access points on WEEKDAYS	N=29	0.0%	3.4	24.1	65.5	6.9%	
The number of people (and their boats) recreating along the shoreline on WEEKENDS	N=30	6.7%	33.3%	30.0	30.0	0.0%	
The number of people (and their boats) recreating along the shoreline on WEEKDAYS	N=28	0.0%	10.7	32.1	53.6	3.6%	
The number of people recreating in the island interior (e.g., hiking, walking, recreating at least 100 yards inland away from the shoreline) on WEEKENDS	N=28	3.6	10.7	17.9	67.9	0.0%	
The number of people recreating in the island interior (e.g., hiking, walking, recreating at least 100 yards inland away from the shoreline) on WEEKDAYS	N=27	0.0%	0.0%	14.8	74.1	11.1%	
Overall, the amount of human-caused impacts to natural resources on the island	N=27	0.0%	25.9	40.0	33.3	0.0%	
The amount of human-caused impacts to natural resources at public access points	N=25	4.0%	36.0	40.0	20.0	0.0%	
The amount of human-caused impacts to natural resources found along the shoreline	N=28	3.6%	32.1	39.3	25.0	0.0%	

<b>The amount of human-caused impacts to natural resources in the island interior</b>	N=24	0.0%	12.5	41.7	45.8	0.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
		6.3%	3.1	3.1	46.9	40.6%
<b>The relatively limited number of designated hiking trails on the island</b>	N= 32	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The relatively limited number of signs (informational and directional) on the island</b>	N=30	6.7%	3.3	6.7	56.7	26.7%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The relatively limited number of toilet facilities on the island</b>	N=29	13.8%	34.5	6.9	31.0	13.8%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The lack of boat docks at public access points</b>	N=32	3.1%	18.8	6.3	18.8	53.1%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The quality of signs (informational and directional) on the island</b>	N=31	3.2	3.2	16.1	48.4	29.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The number of park visitors who are too noisy</b>	N=26	0.0%	23.1	42.3	34.6	0.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The number of park visitors who are partying and/or drinking alcohol</b>		12.0%	12.0	60.0	16.0	0.0%
					N=25	

*Each of the following topics below make reference to practices that are definitely unacceptable. However, when responding to these topics, think only in terms of whether or not the AMOUNT is acceptable or unacceptable:*

<b>Overall, the amount of litter on the island</b>	N=29	13.8%	24.1	24.1	37.9	0.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
			16.7%	41.7	16.7	25.0
<b>The amount of litter at public access points</b>	N=24	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

## 1. (continued)

DURING THE SUMMER USE SEASON (July – September),  
how acceptable or unacceptable is:

Very unacceptable  
Unacceptable  
Neither acceptable  
or unacceptable  
Acceptable  
Very acceptable

I don't know

*Each of the following topics below make reference to practices that are definitely unacceptable. However, when responding to these topics, think only in terms of whether or not the AMOUNT is acceptable or unacceptable:*

<b>The amount of litter along the shoreline</b>	N=29	6.9%	34.5	20.7	37.9	0.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The amount of litter in the island interior</b>	N=25	12.0%	4.0	32.0	52.0	0.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

The amount of human body waste (human feces) and toilet paper at public access points	N=22	27.3%	40.9	13.6	18.2	0.0%
	1	2	3	4	5	
The amount of human body waste (human feces) and toilet paper along the shoreline	N=27	25.9	29.6	14.8	29.6	0.0%
	1	2	3	4	5	
The amount of human body waste (human feces) and toilet paper in the island interior	N=25	20.0%	24.0	36.0	20.0	0.0%
		1	2	3	4	5
The amount of trespassing occurring on private property located on the island on WEEKENDS	N=29	27.6	37.9	17.2	17.2	0.0%
	1	2	3	4	5	
The amount of trespassing occurring on private property located on the island on WEEKDAYS	N=28	25.0%	21.4	21.4	32.1	0.0%
		1	2	3	4	5
The amount of vandalism occurring on private property located on the island	N=28	17.9%	21.4	32.1	28.6	0.0%
		1	2	3	4	5

Other park conditions:

(please specify)

**13. How well do the following statements describe your feelings about the current rules and regulations pertaining to recreational use of Wild Horse Island State Park?** (Circle the number that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement or check the “I don’t know” box if you don’t know).

Statement:		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	I don’t know
		1	2	3	4	5	
The current group size restriction of no more than 15 people per group is acceptable to me	N=31	3.2%	35.5	12.9	32.3	16.1%	
		1	2	3	4	5	
I think the current group size restriction should be increased -- more than 15 people per group should be allowed on the island	N=31	67.7	29.9	0.0	0.0	3.2%	
		1	2	3	4	5	
I think the current group size restriction should be decreased -- fewer than 15 people per group should be allowed on the island	N=30	0.0%	6.7	40.0	20.0	33.3%	
		1	2	3	4	5	

2. (continued)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	I don’t know
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Statement:

		0.0%	9.4	3.1	43.8	43.8%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The current regulation that prohibits pets on the island is acceptable to me</b>	N=32					
<b>I believe pets should be allowed on the island as long as their owners are required to keep them on a leash at all times</b>	N=33	42.4%	24.2	6.1	24.2	3.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The current regulation that prohibits overnight camping on the island is acceptable to me</b>	N=33	0.0%	3.0	0.0	21.2%	75%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>I believe overnight camping should be allowed on the island at designated camping locations</b>	N=32	78.1%	21.9	0.0	0.0	0.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The current regulation prohibiting the use of mountain bikes on the island is acceptable to me</b>	N=33	3.0%	0.0	0.0	18.2	78.8%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>I think visitors should be allowed to use mountain bikes while visiting the island</b>	N=33	87.9%	9.1	0.0	0.0	3.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The current regulation prohibiting island visitors from using any type of fire on the island is acceptable to me</b>	N=32	0.0%	3.1	3.1	6.3	87.5%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>I think island visitors should be allowed to use propane gas stoves along the island shoreline</b>	N=33	63.6%	27.3	3.0	6.1	0.0%
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

**18. To what extent do you support or oppose businesses offering shuttle services to the island for a fee?**  
(check only one)

	69.7%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly oppose</b>
	18.2%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Oppose</b>
N=33	9.1%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither support nor oppose</b>
	3.0%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Support</b>
	0.0%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly support</b>

**Why do you support or oppose?**

**19. To what extent do you support or oppose businesses offering guided tours of the island for a fee?**  
(check only one)

	69.7%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly oppose</b>
	15.2%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Oppose</b>
N=33	15.2%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither support nor oppose</b>
	0.0%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Support</b>

0.0% [ ] Strongly support

**Why do you support or oppose?**

---

**20. This question has three parts:**

- a. First, this past summer use season only (July-September 2002), about how many total Days did you recreate on the PUBLIC, non-privately owned portions of Wild Horse Island State Park? (check only one)

N=33

15.2%	[ ]	Zero days
12.1%	[ ]	1-2 days
15.2%	[ ]	3-5 days
21.2%	[ ]	6-10 days
36.4%	[ ]	More than 10 days

- b. Second, this past summer use season (July-September 2002), about how many total Days did members of your family recreate on the PUBLIC, non-privately owned portions of Wild Horse Island State Park? (check only one)

N=33

9.1%	[ ]	Zero days
9.1%	[ ]	1-2 days
15.2%	[ ]	3-5 days
27.3%	[ ]	6-10 days
39.4%	[ ]	More than 10 days

- c. Third, this past summer use season (July-September 2002), about how many total Days did your guests or guests of your family recreate on the PUBLIC, non-privately owned portions of Wild Horse Island? (check only one)

18.8%	[ ]	Zero days
21.9%	[ ]	1-2 days
9.4%	[ ]	3-5 days
21.9%	[ ]	6-10 days
28.1%	[ ]	More than 10 days

6. How many years has the property you currently own on Wild Horse Island been owned by you or someone in your family? \_\_\_\_\_ (years) Mean= 26.2 yrs. Median=30.0 yrs.

7. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ (years) Mean=58.8 yrs. Median=60.5 yrs.

8. What is your gender? [ ] Female [ ] Male

N=33                      36.4%                      63.6%



**9. Are you a current resident of Montana?** (check only one)

	54.5%	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
N=33	45.5%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes.....If yes, how many years have you lived in Montana? ____(years)

N=14 Mean=48.5 yrs.  
Median=46.5 yrs.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

## **Appendix C**

### **Zone Management and Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC)**

Because of the diversity of resources, uses and conditions, few areas can be managed uniformly. How well an area endures use will vary from site to site. In addition, most visitors differ in their definitions of what constitutes a quality experience. Management approaches that work in one area may not be very effective in others. Zoning is a method that recognizes these differences. It attempts to segment a given area according to its' resource attributes and utilize different strategies to protect the resource while maximizing recreational opportunities as a whole. It requires different standards, use levels and activities to be applied to the various segments so that the natural character of the entire area is not lost.

The zone management and LAC process developed for Wild Horse Island (Figure 1.) will be based on the concept that originally had been initiated for Wild Horse Island in 1987, but was not fully implemented. Zone management is an approach that will be applied to all state parks in Region 1 for purposes of management consistency. Those zones or classes described for Wild Horse Island may also be applied at other areas as well (Table 1).

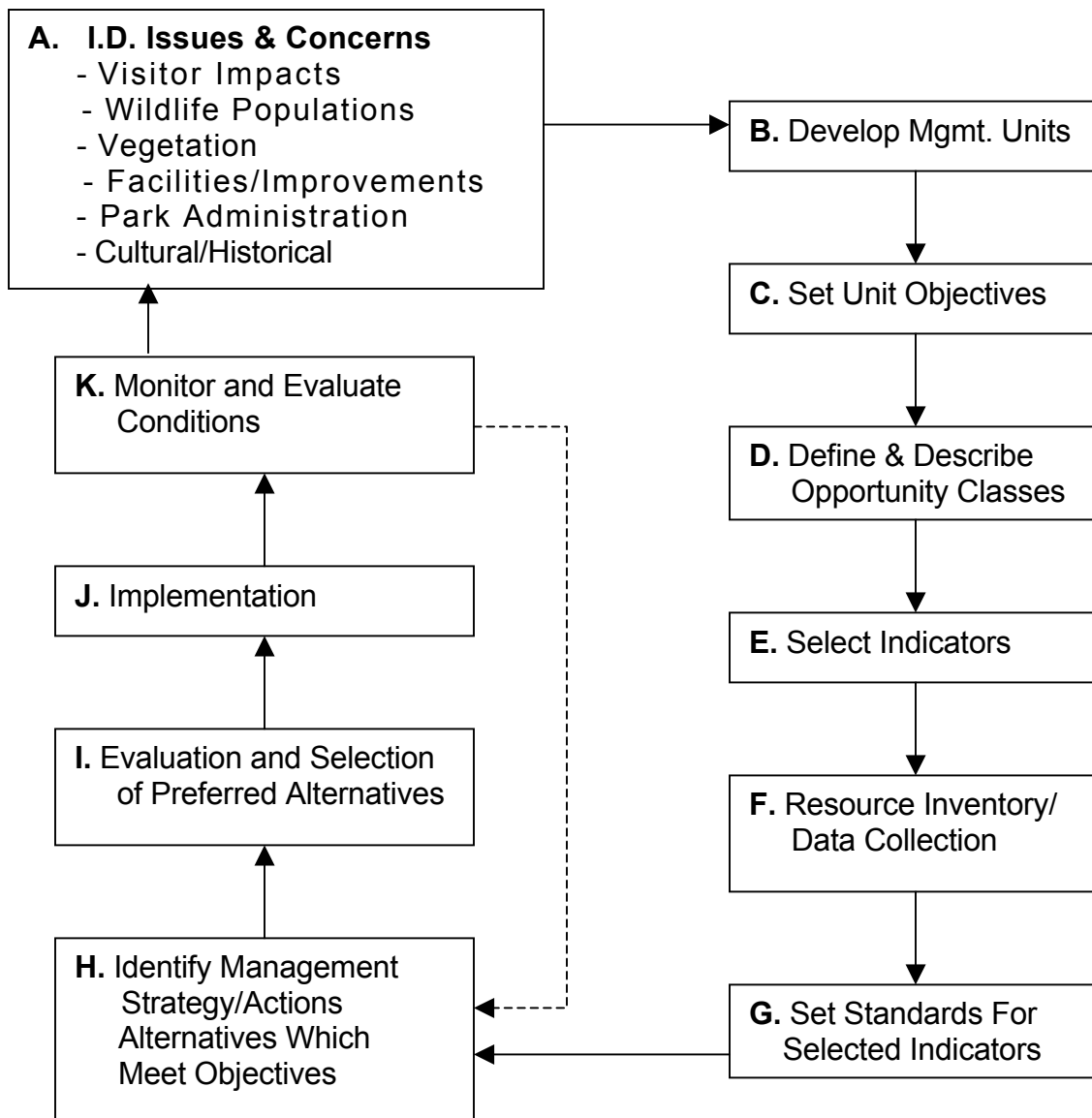
#### *LAC Overview (condensed from Stankey et al., 1985)*

The basic premise of the LAC concept is that change is a natural inevitable consequence of recreation use. Both environmental and social changes are involved. The nature and extent of these changes will vary throughout an area because of differences in types and amount of use, susceptibility of vegetation and soils to use pressure and other factors. LAC directs its attention from use level as a key management concern to the environmental and social conditions desired in a particular setting. It focuses directly on managing for desired conditions, rather than on how recreation itself should be managed. Traditionally, the task of primitive area management was to define the level beyond which excessive impact would occur. The LAC framework with its emphasis on desired conditions, attempts to define what is acceptable change for a particular impact. Impacts as a result of recreational use are inevitable because even light use causes some ecological change. These impacts affect nearly all aspects of the ecosystem, especially soils and vegetation , and are a contributing factor .in determining the quality of a primitive experience and whether displacement occurs.

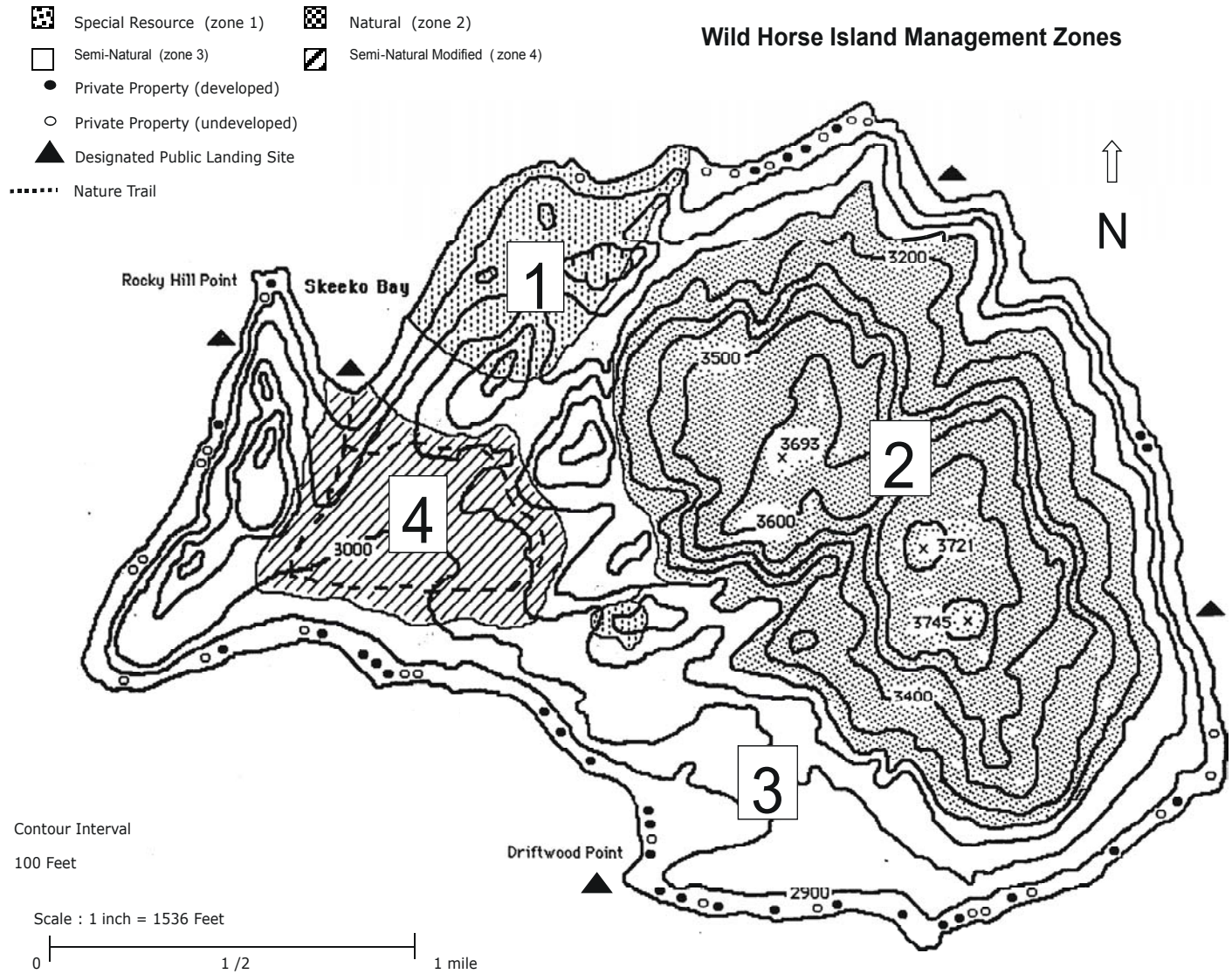
Zone management incorporates the LAC process by dividing an area into sub-units or compartments

(Figure 2.), setting management objectives for these units, and defining and describing the recreation opportunity afforded in these units through a classification system. Within each compartment there are indicators and standards which can be used to maintain the objectives of the particular unit and the preferred setting. Finally, in order to maintain the standards for the unit, some type of monitoring system must be incorporated into the management of the unit. When the standards are approached, met or exceeded management actions to maintain acceptable levels of change will occur.

Figure 1. Limits of Acceptable Change Planning Model



**Figure 2. WHI Management Zones**



**Table 1. General Characteristics of Opportunity Classes**

Recreational Opportunity Class	<u>Class 1</u> SPECIAL RESOURCE (roadless)	<u>Class 2</u> NATURAL (roadless)	<u>Class 3</u> SEMI- NATURAL (roadless)	<u>Class 4</u> SEMI- NATURAL MODIFIED (roadless)	<u>Class 5</u> SEMI- NATURAL MOTORIZED	<u>Class 6</u> MODIFIED NATURAL MOTORIZED	<u>Class 7</u> Modified Motorized
Characteristic							
<b>Resource Conditions</b>	Primitive/ unmodified	Primitive/ unmodified	Minor temporary changes to environment	Limited, but visible permanent changes to environment	Confined permanent changes	Modified	Highly modified, significant alterations
<b>Human Impacts</b>	Not noticable	Limited, but visible, annual recovery of site	Confined, visible year to year, partial site recovery	Confined, visible year to year, no recovery of site, some minor site hardening	Confined, highly visible, moderate site hardening	Many locations highly visible, high level of site hardening	Widespread, extensive site hardening
<b>Interaction with other users</b>	Very low	Very low	Low	Low to moderate mostly along trails or at access points	Moderate, along trails, roads & near facilities	Moderate to high	High, others visible throughout area
<b>Opportunities for isolation and solitude</b>	Generally excellent	excellent	Very good	Good to Fair	Fair	Poor, others visible throughout area	Virtually non-existent
<b>Challenge</b>	High	High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Low
<b>Response to emergencies</b>	Low	Low	Low	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	High
<b>Interpretive opportunities</b>	Self- discovery	Self- discovery	Brochures/ maps limited signing	Brochures, maps, signing, display panels, guided hikes	Brochures, maps, display panels, kiosks, guided hikes	Brochures, maps, display panels, kiosks, guided hikes, programs, visitor centers	Brochures, maps, display panels, kiosks, guided car tours, programs visitor centers
<b>Evidence of management presence</b>	None, except for marked boundaries	Limited to subtle indirect methods	Minor, at access points, trail junctions or critical areas	Minor, along trails, access points, or critical areas	Noticeable at access points, along roads or at camp areas	Readily apparent at access points, along roads or camp areas	apparent throughout area
<b>Area Closure Classifications</b>	Permanent or temporary to protect resource	Temporary, for resource protection	Temporary, for resource protection	Temporary, for resource protection	Temporary, for resources or visitor safety	Temporary, for resources or visitor safety	Temporary, for visitor safety

Recreational Opportunity Class	<u>Class 1</u> SPECIAL RESOURCE (roadless)	<u>Class 2</u> NATURAL (roadless)	<u>Class 3</u> SEMI- NATURAL (roadless)	<u>Class 4</u> SEMI- NATURAL MODIFIED (roadless)	<u>Class 5</u> SEMI- NATURAL MOTORIZED	<u>Class 6</u> MODIFIED SEMI- NATURAL MOTORIZED	<u>Class 7</u> MODIFIED RURAL MOTORIZED
Characteristic							
Typical Recreation Activities	Hiking (limited by closure restrictions)	Hiking, picnicking, wildlife viewing & photography, outdoor skills development	Hiking, picnicking, camping (primitive) wildlife viewing & photography, outdoor skills development	Hiking, picnicking, camping, wildlife viewing & photography, interpretive guided hikes,	Camping, hiking picnicking, fishing, boating, swimming	Camping, hiking picnicking, fishing, boating swimming	Camping, hiking picnicking, fishing, boating swimming
Disabled Accessibility	No special accommodation	No special accommodation	No special accommodation	Limited accommodations may be made, consideration based on impact to experience and naturalness of the setting	Accommodation made for accessibility to some facilities	Accommodations for accessibility to trails & other facilities	Accommodations for accessibility to trails & other facilities
Site Modification	None	None	Limited to access points	Limited, access points, along trails, pts. Of interest	Limited, access points, along roads, pts. Of interest	Frequent, access pts., along roads, at facilities	Frequent, access pts., along roads, at facilities
Motorized Use	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Facilities	None	None	Health, safety, resource protection	Health, safety, resource protection	Health, safety, resource protection, visitor convenience	Health, safety, resource protection, visitor convenience	Health, safety, resource protection, visitor convenience
Trails	Game type trails, with up to level 1 maintenance standards (natural surface)	Utilize game type trails, up to level 1 maintenance standards (natural surface)	Game trail w/ minor constructed connecting sections, level 2 maint. standards (natural surface)	Utilize game trails, some longer constructed sections, up to level 2 maint. Standards (natural surface)	Design construction up to level 3 (wood chip or light gravel surface)	Design construction up to level 3+ (high standard gravel surface)	Design construction up to level 3+ (high standard gravel or paved surface)
Signing	Only to mark boundary	None	Limited to access points	Limited, access points, along trails & at junctions	Limited, access points, along roads, junctions, near facilities	Frequent	Frequent
Ranger Patrols	May be frequent around perimeter	Infrequent	Limited patrols during peak visitation periods	Regular patrols during peak visitation periods, limited off-season	Regular patrols during peak visitation periods, limited off-season	Regular patrols during peak visitation periods, limited off-season	Regular patrols during peak visitation and off-season periods
Roadways	None	None	None	None	Natural surfacing or light gravel	Low standard gravel or paving	High standard gravel or paving

## A. Purpose

To develop guidelines for management of primitive dispersed recreational use in order to maximize compatible recreational opportunities for the visitor, while maintaining a standard of quality for the resource.

## B. Definitions

- a. Dispersed Recreation - Division approved activities, which occur in areas other than those with developed facilities such as campgrounds or picnic areas. The location of these areas is accessible by foot travel or boat.
- b. Recreational Opportunity - those opportunities available to the visitor, which allows them to seek satisfying experiences through activities in preferred settings.
- c. Preferred Settings - the combination of physical, biological, social and managerial conditions that give value to a place.
- d. Zoning - refers to different management approaches/actions for different sections of a primitive area.
- e. Displacement - the changing of participation in recreation opportunities due to dissatisfaction by not being able to attain what is desired. Displacement from one recreation opportunity to another can be caused by a variety of reasons (e.g. available activities/settings change).

## C. Procedure

The following steps are guidelines to be used for LAC zoning of Wild Horse Island.

- a. Zones (compartments) should be established according to the following criteria:
  - 1. Use patterns within a zone should be similar.
  - 2. The topography of the zone should be uniform.
  - 3. Trailheads and the travel routes to all areas of the zone should be comparable.
  - 4. Areas of similar vegetation types will be included where possible.
  - 5. Presence of threatened and endangered species.
- b. The amount and type of use an area can support is dependent on the type of use for which it is managed. In determining what is an acceptable change it is necessary to develop specific objectives for each area. Wild Horse Island has been divided into four zones.

Objectives for Special Resource Zone - To protect threatened and endangered species and other identified special resources from disturbance by visitors.

Objective for Natural Zone - Provide opportunities to fulfill desires for solitude and isolation, self-reliance and achievement, to engage in activities requiring high amounts of physical effort and risk taking, where inter-party contact is low, and security (availability of help in an emergency) minimal.

Objective for Semi-Natural Zone -Provide opportunities to learn or develop outdoor skills, to view wildlife in a natural setting where security and risk is moderate.

Objective for Semi-Natural Modified Zone -Provide opportunities for environmental education. To view wildlife and historical sites, learn or develop outdoor skills, enjoy family togetherness and engage in activities where small groups may interact, where security is high and risk minimal.

c. Once management objectives are set for each zone then an opportunity class is defined. Most primitive areas contain a variety of physical and biological attributes, use levels and opportunities to recreate. Opportunity classes describe the units where different resource, social, and managerial conditions will be maintained. The classes reflect management objectives for the particular area.

Class 1(Special Resource Zone) - This class represents a special classification and is primarily for the protection of threatened and endangered species and other identified resources of special interest. Some areas may be permanently closed to public access except under special permit. Other areas may be seasonal closures. When access is possible, the area may provide excellent interpretive opportunities. The area is not measurably affected by visitation, and impacts are not usually noticeable and recover annually. No facilities or trails are provided. Signing is limited to area boundary marking. When closed, area is monitored by frequent Ranger Patrols around perimeter.

Class 2 (Natural) - This class provides outstanding opportunities for isolation and solitude. Ecological conditions are not measurably affected by the visitor. Impacts are not readily apparent and normally recover annually. Trails are not developed, are widely scattered, generally unmarked and not maintained. Challenge in this zone is high in that visitors must rely on their own abilities and skills. Signing is absent. Ranger patrols are very infrequent. No facilities are provided. Response time to emergency situations is slow. Access is limited in that terrain features will discourage many visitors from traveling in this area. Group contacts through the area will be few and very rare. Interpretation is through self-discovery. Management presence is not noticeable.

Class 3 (Semi-Natural ) - This class provides excellent opportunities to experience nature and wildlife and scenic viewing. It may include popular recreation and wildlife areas with developed trails and trail maintenance levels. The number of area encounters is moderate and chances of group interaction is minimal.



Impacts may be visible and remain from year to year, but are confined. No facilities are provided except for health or safety concerns. Signing would be limited and infrequent. Management presence is not readily apparent except at access points. Interpretation is through self-discovery with some use of maps and brochures. Ranger Patrols are scheduled on a limited basis.

Class 4 (Semi-Natural Modified) - This class provides opportunities to experience, nature and wildlife and scenic viewing in a family setting. Educational experiences are emphasized. Interpretation is through limited site facilities and includes maps, brochures and guidebooks. It includes popular recreation areas with a developed nature trail and trail maintenance levels. The level of encounters may be moderate to high and chances of group Interaction is likely during peak seasons. Impacts are usually visible and remain from year to year, but are confined. Facilities may be provided for health and safety concerns and for educational purposes. Management presence is readily apparent and ranger patrols are scheduled on a regular basis.

d. The next step in the procedure is to select indicators of changes.

Indicators are specific variables that singly or in combination are taken as indicative of the overall condition of a particular opportunity class. No single indicator is a comprehensive measure, but only a part of what management seeks to achieve through its objectives. It is unrealistic to assess the present condition and change in every resource and social feature on Wild Horse Island, a limited number of indicators will be selected as measures of the overall condition of an area. These examples of indicators relate as directly as possible to the objective set.

#### Social Indicators

- parties at trail head per day
- average party size
- average length of stay
- # of encounters per trip
- total # of visitors
- width of trail
- # of access trails
- litter per segment of trail
- # of conflicts between visitors and private owners

#### Biological Indicators

- # of bighorn sheep, mule deer & wild horses
- % of forest cover vs. prairie
- vigor and population of selected native plant species
- classification of impacted sites ( includes: vegetation loss, bare soil increase, cleanliness etc.)
- threatened and endangered species reduction
- presence and % of noxious weeds

#### Criteria for selecting indicators

- Indicator must be able to be measured in an accurate cost-effective manner.
- The condition of the indicator should reflect a relationship to the amount and type of use occurring.
- Social indicators should be related to issues of concern.
- The condition of the indicator should be capable of being influenced by management action.

e. In the next step, the existing condition of the resource and social conditions are inventoried. This

information provides the basis for setting standards for each indicator. The necessary data will include visitor use and distribution, visitor impacts, wildlife population counts, and range and forest conditions.

- f. After indicators are determined, standards must be set. The purpose of this is to provide a reference point, so that when the current quality of the resource or its uses approach, equal or exceed such a point, mitigating action will be taken by management. Over the different opportunity classes standards will describe a gradation of conditions. For example, the number of acceptable encounters in the semi-primitive zone will be higher than that found in the most primitive zone. Standards that are set will be fairly subjective at first, and represent desired conditions until such time as management is able to evaluate their effectiveness in protecting the resource and the recreational opportunities managed for in a given area. However, it must be kept in mind that whatever standard is set, it must relate back to maintaining the objectives and opportunity class of a given zone. Examples of standards would include: maximum acceptable number of visitor encounters per day, total number of visitors per access point, maximum number of bighorn sheep and mule deer.

#### Standards for Indicators

TBA - currently being developed

- g. After indicators and standards are set, then management actions to achieve the desired objectives are identified. Again it must be emphasized that the identified actions must be conducive to the objectives and opportunity class of a given zone. For example, designated trails, toilets, and picnic tables do not fit into a primitive classification, where development and management presence are minimal. Management action can take the form of regulations (e.g. no pets, no camping, group size limits).

#### Management Actions to Maintain Standards - TBA

- h. Evaluation, selection and implementation of preferred alternatives is the next step. Management actions would be evaluated and selected through use of the Management Strategy Matrix. Basically this involves comparing alternatives against each other by means of a set of decision criteria.
- i. In this step, a monitoring program is initiated which focuses on the indicators and standards previously developed. Monitoring involves collection of information on the selected indicators for the purpose of evaluating how close current conditions are to the prescribed standards. It can be used to determine why conditions are acceptable or unacceptable and provide information for developing, analyzing and implementing any necessary changes in direction.
- j. Monitoring Methodology

The monitoring process must not only measure impacts directly related to recreational use, but also those changes as a result of indirect human activities. These would include soil disturbance and overgrazing from wildlife, encroachment of forest on prairie areas; introduction of exotic plant species, noxious weed and insect infestations and tree diseases. The methodology needed to monitor the selected indicators is currently being developed.

## **Appendix D**

**23-1-116. Primitive parks established.** Because of their unique and primarily undeveloped character, the following state parks and management areas are designated as primitive parks and are subject to the provisions of 23-1-115 through 23-1-118:

- (1) Big Pine management area;
- (2) Thompson Falls state park;
- (3) Wild Horse Island state park;
- (4) Lost Creek state park;
- (5) Painted Rocks state park;
- (6) Ackley Lake state park;
- (7) Sluice Boxes state park;
- (8) Deadman's Basin state park;
- (9) Pirogue Island state park;
- (10) Medicine Rocks state park;
- (11) Headwaters state park;
- (12) Council Grove state park;
- (13) Beaverhead Rock state park;
- (14) Natural Bridge state park; and
- (15) Madison Buffalo Jump state park.

**History:** En. Sec. 2, Ch. 501, L. 1993; amd. Sec. 6, Ch. 476, L. 1995.

**23-1-117. (Temporary) Limit on development of primitive parks.** (1) Except as permitted in Headwaters state park for the limited purposes provided in subsections (3) through (5), the only development allowed in primitive parks designated in 23-1-116 is:

- (a) necessary improvements required to meet minimum public health standards regarding sanitation, which may include necessary access to outhouses, vaults, and water;
- (b) improvements necessary to ensure the safe public use of existing boat ramps;
- (c) addition of gravel to existing unpaved roads and the resurfacing of paved roads when necessary to ensure safe public access;
- (d) establishment of new hiking trails or improvement of existing hiking trails; and
- (e) installation of minimal signage indicating that the park is a designated primitive park in which development has been limited and encouraging the public to help in maintaining the park's primitive character by packing out trash.

(2) The following development of designated primitive parks is prohibited:

- (a) installation of electric lines or facilities, except when necessary to comply with subsection (1)(a);
- (b) installation of recreational vehicle sanitary dumpsites where they do not presently exist; and
- (c) creation of new roads and paving of existing but previously unpaved roads.

(3) The orientation area at Headwaters state park may be rebuilt and expanded in order to prepare for and manage increased visitation expected for the Lewis and Clark bicentennial, to include:

- (a) an unstaffed information kiosk;
  - (b) sanitation facilities;
  - (c) additional parking; and
  - (d) additional signage to inform visitors about the history and uses of the park and services in the surrounding area.
- (4) The existing parking area at the confluence of the Madison and Jefferson Rivers in the Headwaters state park may be improved, but not enlarged, using parking features that can be removed. Low-profile interpretive signs may be installed in place of existing signage

(5) Interpretive and directional signage may be installed at Headwaters state park to educate visitors about the history and significance of the site and to orient visitors to the features of the park and the surrounding area. *(Terminates December 31, 2003-sec. 3, Ch. 264, L. 2001.)*

**23-1-117. (Effective January 1, 2004) Limit on development of primitive parks.** (1) As of October 1, 1993, the only development allowed in primitive parks designated in 23-1-116 is:

(a) **necessary improvements required to meet minimum public health standards regarding sanitation, which may include necessary access to outhouses, vaults and water;** b) **improvements necessary to ensure the safe public use of existing boat ramps;**

(c) **addition of gravel to existing unpaved roads and the resurfacing of paved roads when necessary to ensure safe public access;**

(d) **establishment of new hiking trails or improvement of existing hiking trails; and**

(e) **installation of minimal signage indicating that the park is a designated primitive park in which development has been limited and encouraging the public to help in maintaining the park's primitive character by packing out trash.**

**(2) The following development of designated primitive parks is prohibited:**

(a) **installation of electric lines or facilities, except when necessary to comply with subsection (1)(a);**

(b) **installation of recreational vehicle sanitary dumpsites where they do not presently exist; and**

(c) **creation of new roads and paving of existing but previously unpaved roads.**

**History: En. Sec. 3, Ch. 501, L. 1993; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 264, L. 2001.**

**Compiler's Comments** include an unstaffed information kiosk,

*2001 Amendment:* Chapter 264 at sanitation facilities, more parking, and more beginning of (1) substituted "Except as information signs; inserted (4) allowing permitted in Headwaters state park for the improvement, but not enlargement, of the limited purposes provided in subsections (3) parking area at the confluence of the Madison through (5)" for "As of October 1, 1993"; and Jefferson Rivers; and inserted (5) allowing inserted (3) allowing the Headwaters state interpretive and directional signs to be park orientation area to be rebuilt and installed at Headwaters state park. expanded, for expected increased visitation Amendment effective April 19, 2001, and during the Lewis and Clark bicentennial, to terminates December 31, 2003.

## Appendix E

### Cedar Island

### Main Building





## Cedar Island Outbuildings



Orchard Storage Building



Well- House



Boat House



Fruit Storage Building

## Appendix F

### **Zelezny Access**



## **Appendix G**

FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

FLATHEAD LAKE ISLANDS PLANNING PROCESS

Advisory Committee Meeting

March 13, 2003

### **Session Documentation**

#### **AGENDA ITEMS**

- Introduction to the session: Agenda and ground rules review
- Reviewing “homework” – Pertinent items from the surveys
- Developing final recommendations for Wild Horse Island and the 3 small islands:
  - Vision and guiding principles
  - General management strategies
  - Specific management strategies (natural environment and ecosystems; cultural and historical resources; human-related/public use/facilities; commercial use)
- Finalizing recommendations regarding “indicators” or standards to be used in the LAC process
- Forwarding the recommendations:
  - Department feedback
  - “Transmittal letter”?
  - Product format
- Where does the process go from here?

#### **GROUND RULES REVIEW**

- *Listen to understand; listen actively; listen honorably.*
- *Allow the other speaker to finish.*
- *Demonstrate respect by allowing all ideas and questions to come to the table.*
- *Avoid shouting and “attacking”.*
- *Acknowledge history but don’t allow yourself to get bogged down in it.*
- *Stick to the point and focus on the discussion issue at hand.*
- *Monitor your own communication.*
- *Work toward a consensus set of recommendations for the Department. When full agreement cannot be reached on a particular issue, varying points of view will be presented in a written discussion that will accompany the recommendations.*



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND “INTERESTS”

Guiding principles and “interests” identified and used in the process are found in Appendix I.

## “HOMEWORK” – REVIEWING VISITOR AND ISLAND RESIDENT SURVEYS

Comments from individual Advisory Committee members regarding the surveys included:

- The Survey gives some good indicators/standards from users who responded including the following:
  - Visitors were generally happy with current management and conditions.
  - There is a lack of restroom/toilet facilities on the Lake.
  - Some would like to use portable propane stoves (e.g., propane camp stoves) on the Island for picnics.
- Survey numbers could inform the “indicator” or standards process; however, only 90 of 9,000 annual visitors were involved in the survey so we need to be careful in how it is used.
- Among those surveyed, there was general support for the current Management Zone concept.
- Most responders seemed to want to maintain and conserve Wild Horse Island by assuring that people impacts don’t lead to degradation.
- The survey isn’t scientific because it does not sample people statewide, it is not a full random sample, and it is biased by user groups and Island residents (i.e., Island homeowners, people who own property around the lakeshore, and people who can access the Island by boat). The survey questions were not developed with the Charter Boat Appeal in mind. Questions were leading toward regulation and non-commercial usage and restricted usage and the Survey was designed to elicit a fear of over-use. It does not address the number of people who don’t can’t use the Island because of lack of access and this is further compounded by the State deliberately not promoting commercial access to the Island. Many of the questions seemed aimed at a Wilderness area, not a primitive State Park.
- A shuttle service and a private charter service are 2 different entities.
- It is unclear how many of the people surveyed got to the Island(s) by rental services.
- Most of the use seems to occur in about one-fifth of the Wild Horse Island.
- Of those surveyed in response to “What do you expect on the Island?”, most visitors indicated a primitive park with primitive development and facilities.
- Most visitors appear happy with current management with Island landowners less happy.
- The Survey was aimed at current user satisfaction and was developed to help determine user groups. We don’t know how many people are denied access because they couldn’t get there on their own.
- The Survey seems statistically valid taken in the context that it was developed – uncomfortable with the way “on the lake” and “getting to the Island” are tied together.
- We need better data to look at trends in addition to numbers. We have an advantage in that we are ahead of the game in terms of Island conservation.

- According to the Surveys, eighty-eight percent of homeowners and fifty-five percent of visitors opposed shuttle service. Eighty-three percent of visitors surveyed opposed shuttle service to Cedar and Bird Islands. A conclusion could be that there is little support for shuttle service to the Island(s) among those surveyed. The underlying fear appears to be that too many people will come to the Island(s) and degradation of the resources and the visitor experience will increase.
- Fifty-five percent of visitors surveyed said they wanted to see less than 5 people per hour in the interior of the Island to have a quality experience. Fifty-six percent stated they wanted to see no more than 2 within 50 yards. These responses suggest that people come to the Island to find a measure of solitude – a primitive experience. Those surveyed also indicated that they felt 15 was a reasonable number for a group visiting the Island. These seem somewhat contradictory.
- These Surveys were designed for a particular purpose and after going through this process, we are finding that they might not be capturing the information we would ask for at this point.
- The Surveys obviously involved people who had access to the Island and not others.

## DEVELOPING FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Revise the current Islands Management Plan to reflect the following:

### A. Wild Horse Island

#### Vision

Wild Horse Island is a wild place, open Palouse Prairie and dense Montane forest ecosystems. Most of the island is accessible to the public with private residences scattered around its perimeter. Management issues are addressed through collaboration directed by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Human impacts to wildlife, cultural and historical sites, vegetation, island ecosystem, and private property are managed within a "Limits of Acceptable Change" process.

#### Guiding Principles

- We acknowledge that Wild Horse Island is a primitive park.
- We believe that active management strategies, including fire, chemical, biological and mechanical measures, can protect and maintain the island and its ecosystems.
- We believe that the priority in management decisions and actions should be protection of the Island's environment.
- We believe that in order to preserve the wild experience of visitors and the health of the ecosystem, dispersed access should be promoted.
- We believe that an island is one component in a larger ecosystem and that it is important to monitor impacts of activities around the island.
- We believe that all use of the Island should complement the management goals of protecting the resource and should provide opportunities for the public to experience the island.

## **General Management Strategies**

1. Set organizational priorities that would allow FWP to begin implementation of the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process (cited in the current Island Management Plan) within one year.
2. Incorporate the following general management strategies into the existing LAC planning model in Appendix C of the 1994 Island Management Plan:
  - Focus on collection of baseline data and identify standards for each LAC category (indicators).
  - Identify management actions to maintain standards.
  - Establish evaluation criteria and monitoring methodology.
3. Maintain four zones of impact to allow different levels of use in each. Establish standards for LAC for each management zone consistent with Table 1 in Appendix C of the 1994 Island Management Plan.
  - Prioritize development of standards based on 2002 use data (map).

## **Specific Management Strategies**

### **A. Natural Environment and Ecosystems**

1. Restore and maintain historic Palouse Prairie/Ponderosa Pine ecosystem through the use of integrated vegetation management techniques (e.g., mechanical, controlled burns, etc.).
2. Incorporate permanent monitoring plots to evaluate vegetative management techniques, including photo points and vegetation plots.
3. Conduct fire occurrence analysis to determine numbers and cause of human-caused fires and develop management strategies that address specific recreational uses (e.g., campfires, propane barbecues, debris burning, etc.).
4. Minimize the occurrence of unwanted human-caused fires through implementation of a comprehensive fire prevention program that includes education, engineering and enforcement. Create site-appropriate forest fire rules and regulations for additional guidance.
5. Implement wilderness trail maintenance standards on Skeeko-to-Cabin trail.
6. Consider improving the Island's wildlife gene pool by planting a few new rams and bucks.
7. Explore conflicting effects of various Island species on each other and identify and manage to reduce those effects (e.g., Assist the eagle population by managing overpopulation of osprey).
8. Maintain the horse numbers at 4 or 5 and replace mortality in the horse population as it occurs.

### **B. Cultural and Historical Resources**

1. Conduct a cooperative inventory of cultural and historical sites on the Island and implement management strategies to protect them based on the inventory (e.g., Direct

and move people away from sensitive areas; eliminate rats and mice (Haunta Virus) at the cabin and barn, etc.).

2. Develop implementation strategy for historic and cultural sites that includes involvement of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe.

### **C. Human-Related/Public Use/Facilities**

1. Increase Island patrols using FWP staff and volunteers.
2. Establish and enforce a “pack it in, pack it out” policy.
3. Limit group size and the number of larger groups at a time on the Island.
4. Establish and enforce a “no pets” policy on the Island.
5. Consider the following when limits of acceptable change indicators are triggered:
  - Visitor permit system (FWP and Tribal)
  - Temporary or permanent closures
  - Time and place regulations
6. Establish and enforce fixed access points within the high visitor impact zone.
7. Relocate access points away from private property areas and obvious wildlife and waterfowl areas.
8. Reevaluate access points to reasonably ensure safe public access. Explore the possibility of mooring buoys or posts at strategic places along the shoreline.
9. Protect the Islands old buildings by improving safety and health situations, education about the structures, and if necessary, preventing visitors from entering them.
10. Reevaluate rules prohibiting removal and/or burning shore debris at access points.

### **D. Commercial use**

The Advisory Committee was unable to come to consensus on recommendations related to commercial use. Per the discussion ground rule regarding consensus and when it cannot be reached, the attached Appendix II offers a summary of Advisory Committee discussion related to commercial use of the Island(s).

### **E. Cedar Island (and Bird and Douglas)**

#### **Vision**

The primary use of Cedar Island and other small Islands is waterfowl protection, particularly during nesting seasons. Human use should be prohibited while the waterfowl are nesting and the islands should be posted during these periods. Outside of those periods, recreation use occurs throughout the island, except for camping, which is confined to a designated area.

#### **Guiding Principles**

- Guiding all management decisions should be concern for protection of waterfowl habitat.

## **General Management Strategies Pertaining to All Three Small Islands**

1. Address human over-use issues through education, signing, and promoting respect for the island and its environmental and historical resources.
2. Improve or remove buildings and obstructions to ensure visitor safety, especially for emergencies.
3. Integrate recreation and waterfowl management strategies (i.e., seasonal visitor closures for waterfowl protection).
4. Work with Tribal entities, complete cultural and historical site inventories.
5. Develop and implement a weed control plan for the smaller islands.
6. Establish guidelines for all users including commercial if and when impacts determine need.
7. Develop and distribute an educational/information brochure describing the specific uniqueness of each small island.
8. Explore and determine the appropriate level of facilities development on the smaller islands.

### **Management Strategies – Cedar Island**

The following strategies for human use of the Island should be considered:

- Toilets
- Remove Fencing
- Education
- Permits and possibly a sign-in board
- Removal of, or improvements to wooden structures on the Island
- Backfilling concrete structures
- Create signage for historical, environmental, information and regulations
- Manage the use of the Zelezny access (e.g., post signs) consistent with other fishing accesses.
- Clarify other access points and their use. Resolve the dock issue to a safe conclusion by improving or removing it.

### **WHERE DOES THE PROCESS GO FROM HERE?**

- The facilitator will document the results of the meeting and forward them to Jerry. He will distribute them to the Committee and he and Kristen will move ahead, incorporating the proposed recommendations in the draft Management Plan.
- Upon distribution to Committee members, they will send any further comments to Jerry, including their feelings about the possibility of a final Advisory Committee meeting somewhere in the remaining process.

# **GENERAL AND INDIVIDUAL “GUIDING PRINCIPLES” AND “INTERESTS” IDENTIFIED AND USED IN THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROCESS**

## **COMMITTEE GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- We acknowledge that Wild Horse Island is a primitive park and that Bird, O’Neil (Douglas), and Cedar Islands are Waterfowl Management Areas.
- We believe that an island is one component in a larger ecosystem and that it is important to monitor activities and potential impacts around, as well as on, the islands.
- We believe that active management strategies can protect and maintain the islands and their ecosystems.
- We believe that the priority in management decisions and actions should be protection of the individual islands’ environment.
- We believe that fire can be used as a management tool to aid animal and plant habitats.
- We recognize that Wild Horse Island has dispersed access now and this should continue.
- We believe that quality of experience is important to Wild Horse Island visitors and to the people who live there.

## **INDIVIDUAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- I believe that we need a Island Management Program that will allow a means to continue to utilize the resources of the Island.
- I believe that human use should be within defined standards so as not to degrade the Islands’ natural resources and that monitoring related to those standards is a necessity.
- I believe that commercial use should compliment the existing goals of protecting the resource and should provide opportunities for the public to experience the Islands through commercial services, but should not lead to reducing or excluding general public access.
- I believe that public access should not be restricted by user class (i.e., commercial, private, landowners, etc.).
- I believe that active management strategies are necessary to protect and maintain the Islands and their ecosystems as well as the quality of experience of visitors and residents.
- I believe that commercial shuttle service to the Islands cannot occur without regulation.

## “INTERESTS”

It is in the interest of:

- Flathead Lakers to preserve water quality, fisheries, and public values regarding the Lake, to participate in the planning process as a “public” representative, and to be a communication conduit to and from the public.
- Conservation-minded publics to be at the table with other perspectives, resolve issues, and move forward in terms of sound management direction regarding the Islands.
- Wild Horse Island lot owners and residents to be heard at the table, to have their survey responses known, and to have sound management strategies in place that result in little impact or change to the Island.
- Local communities, commercial service providers, and the tourism industry to be able to provide visitors to the area an opportunity to enjoy Wild Horse and other Islands in a safe, accessible manner.
- Local guides (water and land) to be able to use Wild Horse and other Islands as opportunities for guided trips.
- The Tribes to develop a stronger professional relationship with Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the community, and to be able to bring wildlife, recreation, and Tribal concerns and considerations to the table.
- The current charter boat operator to be able to appeal the decisions of the Department’s Regional Supervisor, Director, and Commission and the recommendations of this Advisory Council.

## SUMMARY OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE’S DISCUSSION RELATED TO COMMERCIAL USES OF WILDHORSE ISLAND (AND THE SMALLER ISLANDS)

The following information summarizes Advisory Committee discussion related to commercial uses of Wild Horse and the State’s smaller Flathead Lake Islands, although the majority of the conversation concentrated on Wild Horse. Readers will find that the Committee was basically unable to consider actual management strategies regarding commercial use because they could not come to agreement on the following issues, and that lack of agreement served as a stumbling block throughout the discussion:

- Are charter boat or shuttle services a commercial use of the Island(s)?
- Does FWP have any authority over those uses as they pertain to management of the Island(s)?

By the end of the process, several Committee members felt that they were not equipped to answer those questions because they are legal in nature; are basically a disagreement between an individual and the State; and consequently, separate from the other considerations regarding the Islands’ Management Plan.

The following documents Advisory Committee Discussion.

## Advisory Committee Discussion Regarding Commercial Use of the Island(s)

### 1. Does a person have the right to navigate the lake?

Advisory Committee members agreed that the answer is “yes”, within the law and established regulations (e.g., life jackets, licenses, etc.).

### 2. What kinds of things should be addressed in the Island Management Plan?

Advisory Committee members listed the following: Management and conservation of the physical and biological resources; identification, management and protection of cultural and historical resources; facilities and access; visitor recreation opportunities and experience; commercial opportunities regarding use of the Island.

### 3. Should there be commercial use of the Island(s), what is considered appropriate commercial use?

Advisory Committee members indicated that they could probably come to agreement on some limited commercial use of the Island(s) if appropriate, enforceable management strategies were in place. In general terms, Advisory Committee members were able to identify some commercial enterprises they would not consider appropriate (e.g., food concessionaires, rental motorized use on the Island, horseback and bicycle concessionaires, retail sales, etc.). No member of the Advisory Committee had any issue with commercial boat service providers navigating Flathead Lake or providing rental equipment to use on the Lake for scenic, fishing, recreational, or educational purposes as long as they were within established laws and regulations.

However, the stumbling block for the Committee regarding commercial had to do with the specific issue related to charter boat or shuttle services. Advisory Committee members could not agree on whether shuttle or charter boats bringing visitors to and from the Island(s), constitutes a commercial use of the Island. Committee members had disagreements on whether FWP has any regulating capacity on commercial ventures on waterways, and in this case, on “taxis” on the Lake. Some Committee members compared bus or train service to State or National Parks to shuttle services to the Island, pointing out that buses and trains are not regulated as commercial uses of a Park. Other members felt that people arriving at a destination on buses or trains generally have a variety of opportunities that may or may not include entering a State or National park and that transportation is the main purpose of buses and trains. Those members felt that shuttle or charter boat services who were compensated for bringing visitors to and from a State Park Island for the specific purpose of visiting the Island, constitutes “using” the Island commercially. They found it comparable to commercially guided kayak or paddling trips where people leave their boats and visit the Island.

Some Committee members felt that it was inappropriate to exempt shuttle or charter boat providers from “commercial” designation regarding the Island(s) because other commercial users bringing people to the Island who operate through bona-fide educational institutions



(e.g., FVCC sponsored guided kayak or paddling trips) get permits from FWP and are required to stay within the current group size of 15. Those members also pointed out that other non-profit groups (e.g., Boy Scouts, Glacier Institute classes, etc.) are also required to have permits and stay within the established group size.

Committee members wondered what might happen if the current situation of one provider grew to 4 or 5 or more charter boat or shuttle service unregulated providers and how that might impact Island resources and visitor experience.

Other Committee members indicated that they were not particularly interested in discussing the State's regulation of shuttle or charter boat service, stating that the real management questions are:

- What are the standards for managing the Island and at what point do those standards get violated in terms of impacts to the Islands natural resources and visitor experience?
- Based on those standards, how should the State manage numbers of people visiting and using the Island(s) including those arriving by commercial carrier?
- And eventually, how would those numbers be allocated between private businesses conveying people to the island & the general public visitors, should more assertive management strategies be necessary in the future?

#### Pro's and Con's of Commercial Shuttle Service to Wildhorse Island

Individual Advisory Committee members listed the following:

##### Pro's

- It's safer to travel to the Island by shuttle service.
- Shuttle service provides faster access to the Island.
- Shuttle service provides access for all (e.g., private charter boats, guided trips, rentals, etc.).
- Shuttle service would end current attempts to restrict public access and allowing access to elitists.
- Shuttle service would stop the country club mentality.
- Shuttle service would continue legal commercial charter boat public access.
- Shuttle service would clarify public access (through Biennial Fee Rule change).
- Shuttle service increases economic opportunity to local communities.
- Shuttle service increases economic opportunity for Tribal members and Tribal enterprises.

##### Con's

- Shuttle service would mean more visitors to the Island and therefore, increase the potential for overuse and degradation of the Island's resources.
- Shuttle service may mean the need for more regulations.

- Shuttle service could increase potential conflicts with other users and landowners.
- Shuttle service to and from the Island promotes an inherently different use ethic.
- Shuttle service would increase visitor use and potentially degrade both the experience and the environment.

## Discussion Regarding the Biennial Fee Rule

Three members of the Committee proposed the following change needed under **II. Definitions D.** of the Biennial Fee Rule. The Advisory Committee could not reach agreement on the proposed change:

- “...brings people into (scratch or to) a designated recreation area and provides a service to them (e.g., guided walk or tour, float trip, (scratch shuttle service, equipment usage or rental), retail sales, etc.) or utilizes...”. Perhaps after “into”, insert clarification such as: “...into (into shall be construed to mean past entrance booth or sign-in board) a designated recreation...) in order to clarify the intent of the Rule per the proposed change offered above.

## Proposed Recommendations

Three members of the Committee proposed the following recommendations regarding commercial use of the Island. Advisory Committee members could not reach agreement on the proposed recommendations:

- Whereas, safe public access, economic business opportunities, Tribal enterprises, etc., are all potential benefits... and whereas potential overuse is undesirable, we recommend and conclude the following:
  - The Treat of the Upper Missouri Article 7 and 8 states “...that the navigation of all lakes and streams shall be forever free to citizens of the United States.” And that the Pollman decision confirmed the above free navigation.
  - The conclusion from this Treaty and decision above (as well as Namen decision) state that navigation is free to the high water mark, as established in Namen at elevation 2,893.0 or full pool as regulated by Kerr Dam and the United States Army Corps, FERC, and the Department of Interior.
- Commercial use shall be defined as a business or individual that for monetary or other consideration, brings clientele into a designated recreation area and provides a service to them, within that designated recreation area (e.g., hot dog stands, guided walk or tour, horseback rides, mountain bike rides, equipment usage or rental, retail sales, etc.) or otherwise utilizes those lands or resources for consideration.
- Because of the above legal Treaty’s and rulings under this revised definition of commercial, we do not recommend any commercial use of Wild Horse Island at this time; future commercial use would be allowed only after study and review.

- Any form of public access is not commercial use. Any regulations restricting number of users to protect resources must be across the Board for all users, and not contingent on the method of access.

“Other Ideas” Related to Commercial Use of the Island from individual members

- Create a hybrid – a FWP/private charter boat/shuttle service partnership within the context of the Islands’ management objectives.
- “Grandfather” current commercial use within management plan objectives and regulations.
- Don’t allow any commercial use until LAC standards have been set and more baseline data collected so that impacts of commercial use can be determined.